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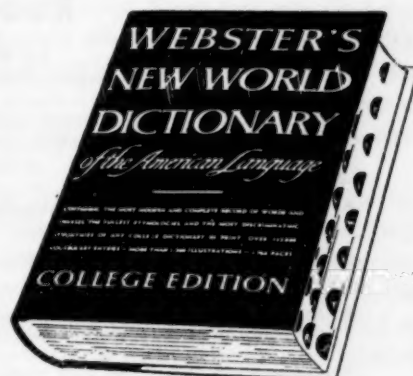
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# COLLEGE ENGLISH

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## *Naturalism Yesterday and Today*

MAXWELL GEISMAR<sup>1</sup>

THE heirs of the literary movement called "naturalism" are under attack from two sides today. The fashionable drift of literary criticism, as in the *Partisan Review*, has in effect pronounced the movement dead. As far back as the 1930's, Willa Cather, in "The Novel Demeublé," outlawed the mere novel of furnishings. The stress in this quarter has been for a return to the Jamesian novel of psychological tension and the Kafka novel of dream symbolism—both representing a withdrawal of the artist from the vulgar and disappointing currents of ordinary American life.

Yet even such a representative novelist of this school as Saul Bellow has suddenly changed to the old-fashioned native picaresque in *The Adventures of Augie March*. (The real influences on the book are those of Dreiser, in *Dawn*, and of Thomas Wolfe.) The naturalistic novels continue to come out, to exhibit unmistakable signs of life and vitality, and to capture the largest reading audience.

In this category we must place such

<sup>1</sup> Critic and essayist; author of *Writers in Crisis*, *The Last of the Provincials*, and the recently published *Rebels and Ancestors*, the first three volumes in a continuing study of the leading American novelists from 1840 to 1940.

recent novels as James Jones's *From Here to Eternity*, Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*, Nelson Algren's *Never Come Morning* and *The Man with the Golden Arm*. Moreover, one could add to this list some less-known but memorable novels like William Styron's *Lie Down in Darkness*, John H. Griffin's *The Devil Rides Outside*, and Feike Feikema's *This Is the Year*. From this area, in brief, have come what are really the most important works of fiction during the last few years—but here also is the second half of the attack on contemporary naturalism.

For it is undoubtedly true that ordinary readers, including many teachers and students of literature, have been confronted by a series of novels in which the language has been frank to the point of immodesty, in which the private lives of the characters—and often the private functions of the body—have been described with a candor amounting to zealotry. In their social environment these novels have often dwelt upon the sordid, the criminal, the brutal; their themes have hardly been suitable for the young American maiden we used to hear about. If, indeed, as the critic H. H. Boyesen

described our literature at the turn of the century, this young maiden was "the Iron Madonna who strangles in her fond embrace the American novelist," a new generation of writers has taken its revenge upon her—over and over again.

No wonder that the average reader sometimes rises in protest or that the sedate Orville Prescott of the *New York Times*, for instance, was forced to defend his praise of James Jones's *Eternity* against a barrage of indignant epistles. Very often today, indeed, that "smiling side of life," which William Dean Howells believed to be typically American, has put on in contemporary fiction what appears to be only a permanent and frozen sneer. Yet, saying all this, I think it will be illuminating to return for a moment to such typical novels of the past as *To Have and To Hold*, *The Prisoner of Zenda*, or *When Knighthood Was in Flower*.

Compared with modern best-sellers, these earlier favorites now seem to have emerged from a different American world or another astral orbit. To read them again is to realize, in concrete form, the depth of the social and cultural change which has occurred in this nation during the last fifty years. In the typical Victorian romance a touch of the hand was a pledge of matrimony—and this in turn was a consummation barely to be hinted at after three hundred pages of baroque adventure. Now these books were written, of course, during a period of the utmost restriction about human relationships but of complete laxity about financial and political morals in our society. They were products of the "genteel tradition" which had imposed a timid and fearful literary orthodoxy upon what was on the whole, in the late nineteenth century, a freebooting, primitive, and empire-building society, spreading its ar-

rogance and its achievements from Faneuil Hall to the Sierra Nevadas.

Thus, what we are now witnessing is a literary upheaval in a country only lately moralistic and provincial in the arts—a country before Kinsey, so to speak—in which the echoes of H. L. Mencken's attacks on the "Puritan Kultur" are still ringing in our ears. It is a literary upheaval in just those areas of expression which were only yesterday either completely taboo or the worst form of social and artistic heresy. And it is, historically, an extreme phase of the battle for freedom of artistic expression which ran its course in our literature from Stephen Crane's *Maggie* in 1893 to, let us say, Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* in 1929.

Some of the results may be a little hard to take, I admit, for those of us who were raised on the popular romances of the 1900's or on the nineteenth-century classic English authors (all those great men, it has been said, who agreed with each other not to tell the truth about life). The French writers of the same period, and the classic Russians, had always felt far more at liberty to describe the private side of both the body and the soul. And part of our dismay at the spectacle of current fiction may be due not so much to its boldness as to our own ingrained heritage of polite literature.

But what is this naturalism? And how did it ally itself with the first currents of modern American realism in the opening decade of this century? Perhaps a brief look at the origins and development of what was, with all its faults, a great liberating movement in our letters will help to clarify some of the modern novels that dazzle and bewilder their readers.

Let me say directly that the definition of the naturalistic school will vary some-

what in the case of each literary historian and, perhaps more importantly, in the case of every novelist's use of its ideas. It is likely that some of the present younger generation of novelists in the United States are quite unaware that they are naturalists at all.

Historically, the school came from the French novelist Zola, the writer who formulated, in a grandiose but inspiring manner, its principles and objectives. It has been called "realism plus science." And it was, in fact, an attempt to relate the discoveries of nineteenth-century European scientific thought—a system of ideas which has almost remade the modern world—to the literature of the time. European naturalism attempted to dispel the superstitions and prejudices of its own period; to see human character in a pragmatic light, and social environment as it actually existed. But we have said that the American literary scene at the turn of the century was even more repressive, circumscribed, and artificial than Zola's France. In the words of a recent commentator, our writing was based on "a propriety so shallow it excluded nature, a tradition so romanticized that it falsified history, a literature so literary that it overlooked whole areas of the life around it."

The first group of twentieth-century American realists (as opposed to the romance tradition) included Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, Jack London, Ellen Glasgow, and Theodore Dreiser: those figures whom I have called "rebels and ancestors." In their struggle against the shallow and trivial literary climate of the 1900's, they were anxious to use all the intellectual resources of their period. They grasped at the support of naturalism's "science"—reassuring even when false—and they added to it, in a curious *mélange*, all the disturbing new ideas of

European thought in the late nineteenth century. But it is important to stress again not only that these writers converted the European movement to particularly American purposes but that each artist—as every artist does—adapted a loose structure of prevailing ideas to the needs of his own temperament and the purposes of his own craft.

Thus Jack London first combined the opposite poles of Marx and Nietzsche in his literary philosophy, and in his later work described the worst extremes of a Darwinian cosmos of monsters and ghouls. Yet Theodore Dreiser, in his highest creative period around 1912, used roughly the same system of ideas to express not only the drama and beauty that could exist in a universe of blind natural forces but, as he believed then, the potential of American life to advance through such conflict to its own maturity as a civilization. It was this massive figure, Dreiser, whose first novel was suppressed (the tender *Sister Carrie*), whose fourth novel, *The Titan*, was rejected by the publishers, whose fifth novel, *The Genius*, was banned in 1915, who became the master and innovator of his period. The success of his battle against the self-imposed custodians of the public morals—and then as now, I may add, they were usually the custodians of ignorance and prejudice—marked the final victory of the long struggle for literary expression in the United States.

This was the "coming of age," in Van Wyck Brooks's phrase, of the modern movement. For what has been called the "Sexual Revolution" in our native letters was actually, during this period, the freedom to discuss human character and human relationships in terms of those primary needs and drives which actually do determine our success or failure in life, which create our happiness and our fol-



lies. The next group of American writers to appear on the literary scene is more familiar today. It included Scott Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis, Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos, and William Faulkner. But to a certain degree the famous figures of the 1920's merely developed and consolidated the literary rights and privileges which had been earned for them during the grim struggle of their ancestors.

These writers, to be sure, carried the literary revival in the United States to its flowering and created the second great renaissance in our letters. As at the peak of any such movement, they were specialized talents, master-craftsmen who also, however, reflected in the aesthetic area the unbridled individualism of their social and economic environment. In a typically native fashion they often seemed as ignorant of their real heritage as they were indifferent to their future. With the advent of the Jazz Age, the flapper, the automobile, and Prohibition, the twentieth century had dawned, if twenty years behind schedule, in Sauk Center, Minnesota, as well as in Greenwich Village.

What happened to this glamorous and brilliant epoch we know all too well, if to our children it is only a casual passage in a textbook. In the swiftly following period of social disaster (which at the present moment, as though it were a national trauma, has been deleted by some historians from the record of the national consciousness) such later figures as Thomas Wolfe and John Steinbeck again turned the currents of American realism and naturalism back to the social principles and communal interests from which they had derived. Among the few major writers of the 1940's, Richard Wright and James T. Farrell carried the same literary convictions and values to

other submerged and neglected sections of American life. Finally, an exotic, morbid, but undoubtedly powerful writer, Henry Miller, combined the earlier standards of native naturalism with the prewar Parisian currents of symbolism and surrealism; and the circuit was closed.

In this brief space I have hardly been able to consider such technical issues of the naturalistic movement as its stress on "determinism," "materialism," and a mechanistic universe, or its method of using massive and sometimes overpowering detail to describe the social environment of a period. These issues are adequately discussed in the textbooks on American literature—although they are never so clearly established in the works of the writers as they are in the minds of the literary critics. Nevertheless, I hope this little survey of the modern movement in American fiction, simplified as it has to be, will contribute to improved understanding of the more strictly contemporary novel.

The victories have all apparently been won. The peak of the movement, and the works which established its fame in world literature, occurred almost a quarter of a century ago. We are now in the void after the flowering; the letdown after the climax. It is almost inevitable, as in the history of artistic movements, that we should have a period of technical virtuosity without serious purpose, of novelists who seem to have everything but values and convictions, of shock for the sake of shock. In their new-found freedom some of the modern realists have viewed the human passions themselves on a purely physical or even mechanical level. The excitations of the body have replaced the impulses of the heart. In another area these authors have succumbed



to the illusion that the private and personal is *ipso facto* the universal and artistic; that the infantile modes of human behavior which are at the base of life are therefore its final goal; that whatever has *not* been described in the literature of the past has to be included in the literature of today.

But it is natural that inferior or purposeless talents—and sometimes real ones—should take momentary advantage of the whole new area of literary expression which has been opened up for them during the first half of the century. It is better, as always, to suffer the abuses of a few than to curtail the rights of the many; and, for myself, I believe there never can be too much freedom. Moreover, we have reached another turning point in the chronology of the modern novel. History is again filling the literary void with a new stimulus, a new challenge. For, while nineteenth-century fiction was sharply circumscribed in its evaluation of human character and human relationships, the artist's right to hold dissenting social or political ideas was almost unquestioned. To a large degree the early currents of realism and naturalism in the 1900's were tied to or actually embodied the western radicalism of the populist movements at the turn of the century.

The demand for social reform—for social justice—is very clear in a work like Frank Norris' *The Octopus*, a direct predecessor of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. More surprisingly, it is just as clear in the early novels of the Virginia aristocrat, Ellen Glasgow. If Dreiser's Sister Carrie and the witless artist of *The Genius* were taboo, it was again typical of the period that the scathing indictment of our financial and political institutions, in *The Financier*, went almost unchallenged. Indeed, the main stream of our

literature since 1900 is in large part a literature of dissent and criticism—which is also, as Robert Spiller has recently said, the fundamental condition of art in an open society and the mark of its vitality. It is the fundamentally democratic condition.

But now, in this new epoch of personal freedom for artistic expression, we have also moved into another period of social and political conformity—of timidity, fear, and suspicion. Ours is also an epoch of shifting social foundations in which the freedom, not only to dissent politically or socially, but even to criticize, has in turn become suspect. Those forces of self-appointed censorship in our past, those forces of ignorance and superstition, have now gained a semiofficial status in our society and have gathered to themselves a semilegal sanction. This is a new and serious mode of spiritual repression which can lead easily from the social and political to the religious, and so back again, in a vicious circle, to the most personal sort of opinions. It threatens the life atmosphere of American thought and American art.

For, if an artist has not yet felt the lash of official condemnation, he has already been sensitized to the less tangible but equally ponderous and oppressive forces of intellectual regularity in our present cultural atmosphere. Think for yourself—but think like everybody else.

Perhaps I can do no better to illustrate this point than to quote a passage from Ellen Glasgow's own work when, early in the modern movement for literary emancipation, she was describing the youthful heroine of *Virginia*:

Her education was founded upon the simple theory that the less a girl knew about life, the better prepared she would be to contend with it. Knowledge of any sort (except the rudiments of reading and writing, the geography of countries

she would never visit, and the dates of battles she would mention) was kept from her as rigorously as if it contained the germs of a contagious disease. . . . The chief object of her upbringing, which differed in no essential particular from that of every other well-born and well-bred Southern woman of her day, was to paralyze her reasoning faculties so completely that all danger of mental "unsettling" or even movement was eliminated from her future. To solidify the forces of mind into the inherited mould of fixed beliefs was, in the opinion of the age, to achieve the definite end of all education.

Written in 1913, it speaks for today; except that what was then southern and feminine now promises to become general. So the battle has to be fought all over again—or, speaking more accurately, it is continuous, merely shifting from the realm of personal expression to that of social opinion, and back again to the personal. In this new period of crisis, too, it is interesting that the European novelists, who have faced up to the historical necessity more intimately than we have yet, have nevertheless managed to preserve a much larger area of intellectual freedom and speculation in their craft. I am thinking not only of French writers like Sartre, or Italians like Moravia and Silone, but of the Spanish au-

thor José Cela, whose recent book, *The Hive*, demonstrates a remarkable individuality in the very midst of an authoritarian regime.

Perhaps our young novelists today will have to seek support and precedent from their European colleagues in the task that faces them; just as did the rebellious ancestors of modern fiction more than half a century ago. Presumably our new writers will also bring over the techniques of such post-naturalistic movements as symbolism and surrealism in order to create a new synthesis of modern realism that is richer and broader in its grasp of both human character and social environment.

The best young novelists today—such as those I mentioned at the opening of this essay—have in fact already done this. This group of writers, too, has had a consistently serious purpose in their work, either of social or human commentary or as craftsmen. What may seem to us still to be extravagant in their writing is probably the excess of youth and novelty; what we should use as a guide in our evaluation is their own larger intention as novelists and the impact of their writing as a whole.

## Somerset Maugham at Eighty<sup>1</sup>

RICHARD A. CORDELL<sup>2</sup>

READERS of Somerset Maugham's latest book, *The Vagrant Mood*, latest, that is, if his new book of essays has not appeared by this time, find it difficult to believe that its author is eighty years old.

An account of Maugham's activities in his eightieth year is bewildering. After recovering from a serious illness and operation, he journeyed to Turkey, where he thought to have a quiet time, as he never receives any royalties from there. Nevertheless, his books have been sold there by the hundreds of thousands, and he found himself a celebrity, sought after by civic leaders and journalists, and the friendly victim of constant police escorts. For two months he toured Turkey, Asia Minor, Greece, and the Isles. Then he returned to Villa Mauresque to entertain a stream of visitors until August, when he went to the Wagner Festival in Bayreuth and then on to Munich before he returned to France. At the end of September he journeyed to London to see the new plays and pictures (not moving) and to make a round of visits. One day in his eightieth year he flew from his home on the Riviera to London, had dinner alone with the Queen, and then flew back to Nice. And he is still writing: every morning he is at work on a new series of essays.

Since his first book was published as long ago as 1897, and since he finished with playwriting in 1933 and with fiction about six years ago, one can see his work

with some perspective and amuse himself by speculating just how high Maugham will rank among the minor writers of our age, or how far down among the major literary figures. The fact that he is the most popular writer in English in our time darkens the critical judgment of those who are suspicious of "best sellers" and unwilling to reconcile excellence with public taste.

Readers of *College English*, more so than those of any other periodical, are familiar with the main events in his interesting if not very exciting life—except during the two world wars—and of the obvious influence on Maugham the author of his endless journeys over much of the globe, which helped clarify his notions of religion and human behavior. Not all, however, are aware of two other striking influences on his writing: his work as intern at St. Thomas Hospital among the poor and afflicted, observing firsthand human suffering, brutality, and courage, and his study of science, which he declares freed him of much wishful thinking and sham idealism. When he was twenty-two, he praised science as "the consoler and healer of troubles, for it teaches how little things matter and how unimportant is life with all its troubles." One result of his professional training is his conviction that every creative writer and literary critic should possess a reasonable knowledge of physiology as well as psychology, for they "must know how the basic elements of literature are related to the minds and bodies of men." Such studies have convinced him that

<sup>1</sup> Maugham will be eighty this January 25.

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traits in his own personality and character were determined in part by his short stature, prognathism, and stammer.

Although shy and modest in many ways, Maugham has always been communicative and informative about his profession, so much so that he is very little the man of mystery as he reaches the age of eighty. In *The Summing Up*, the *Notebooks*, numerous prefaces, and essays he has analyzed his personality and outlined clearly his philosophic, religious, and artistic beliefs. He has freely acknowledged his debt to De Maupassant, Dryden, Voltaire (he has said he would not know how to start a novel without first rereading one of Voltaire's), Swift, and other writers. When asked directly, he has discussed origins of characters in his stories. In the prefaces to his plays and numerous collections of short stories he has told so much about himself as dramatist and story-writer that he has spoiled the chances for dozens of Ph.D. theses of the Scotland Yard type.

Few writers have distinguished themselves in so many literary provinces: novel, short story, personal narrative, literary and art criticism, drama, book of travel, essay. And few writers have succeeded so well in achieving both critical and popular acclaim. He is not, however, universally loved. Arcadians devoted narrowly to Kafka, Sartre, and Eliot (whom Maugham considers the greatest contemporary poet) pretend to see little difference between Maugham and Mary Roberts Rinehart; the leftist critics have in general ignored him or have been patronizing; and even an occasional notable critic like Edmund Wilson has dismissed him as second rate. Although most reviewers have pointed out the obvious decline in merit in his novels since *The Razor's Edge*, his treatment in the

press during the last thirty-five years has been more consistently flattering than that accorded to Wells, Bennett, Lewis, O'Neill, and Hemingway. Perhaps his enormous popularity has been largely independent of critical attention, for, like Mark Twain and Charlie Chaplin, he achieved a large following before the critics approved of him.

It is easy to enumerate reasons that would work against his popularity. For all his bland denial, there is a strong vein of Rochefoucauld-like cynicism in his writing. From almost any orthodox point of view he is a pessimist who denies meaning to existence; in spite of his loyal army of women readers, he is not far from a misogynist, seeming to be less bitter than Strindberg only because of his common sense and humor, qualities lacking in the unhappy Swede; his books are more likely to disturb than to lift; it has been truly said that his humor has heat but little sunshine; moreover, he is a patrician, a hedonist, and a sophisticate who defends his luxurious tastes and his simple conviction that the best is quite good enough for him. The facile political phrase "the common man" holds no attraction for him. There is an adulthood in the quality of his dialogue, in his frequent allusions to art and literature, that should alienate the hypothetical average reader, as should his unorthodox ethical attitudes, his skepticism concerning the easy clichés of rewards and punishments, of sin and virtue, of remorse and conscience.

His real defects as a writer probably lose him few readers. First of all, he has remarkably little imagination and admits that he must utilize for literary purposes character and event as he finds them in real life. Like Wilde, he borrows liberally from his own writings and does not hesitate to repeat his comments and



tart epigrams on truth alias cynicism, the transiency of love, the false notion that suffering ennobles, etc. Some readers find objectionable his constant use of ironic contradiction of character as a theme; but this objection does not bother Maugham, who declares that human nature is unpredictable, even though the psychologists convince one another that they have charted it. He considers himself fortunate in that, though he has "never much liked men," he has found them so interesting that he is almost incapable of being bored by them. His is the cynic's awareness that every man has his price, but the unpleasant fact that for most of us the price is low does not shock him; it amuses him. He is never captious about human shortcomings but willing to accept human beings as they are.

The reasons for his popularity are equally easy to name. By conscious effort he has achieved a lucid, simple, and euphonious style. To him writers who are obscure, abstruse, or overeccentric stylistically are simply bad-mannered. (It is interesting to note how few contemporary critics consider lucidity a virtue of literary style.) He attracts readers through a humor less mordant on the surface than it really is; a pleasantly shocking denial of absolutism in truth, morals, and justice; a sympathy with simple, kindly people and a humorous contempt for the snob and highbrow; considerable exoticism in setting and character; and, most of all, expertness in telling a story. During the harrowing three-week journey on the collier which carried five thousand refugees from Nice to England in 1940 (there were accommodations for thirty-eight) Maugham helped keep up morale by telling stories to the frightened passengers on the open deck of the grimy ship. Readers unconcerned with style

and philosophical illumination read such an inconsequential novel as *Christmas Holiday* with unsophisticated delight.

In fifty-seven years of authorship Somerset Maugham has written twenty novels, more than a hundred short stories, thirty plays, autobiography of a sort, books of travel, and literary criticism. Moreover, he has written introductions to fifteen books by other authors, edited a number of anthologies and great novels, and contributed numerous articles to American and European periodicals. How much of this vast output will be read a generation or a century hence? With our brief perspective we are hardly prepared to predict what his eventual position will be among twentieth-century writers, but we can select the books that seem most likely to attract intelligent readers—and playgoers—for many years to come: five novels, three plays, a much larger number of short stories, and three volumes of nonfiction.

Two of the five novels were written when the author was in his early twenties. *Liza of Lambeth*, which he wrote when he was a fourth-year medical student, is a remarkable first novel. Maugham denies that it was written consciously under the French influence but admits that, when he was in his twenties, Flaubert and De Maupassant (the latter had been a frequenter of his mother's salon in Paris) were among his favorite writers. In *Liza* the London slums are for the first time treated realistically and objectively in fiction. He drew on his own experiences as an intern but carefully suppressed his comment and let the narrative unfold simply and objectively. Maugham has always retained a good opinion of his first novel, and it is interesting to note that he named his only child Liza.

Mrs. Craddock was declined by every



London publisher, who feared its frank treatment of sex and feminine psychology, until Heinemann reconsidered and published it with certain passages deleted. The pleasure afforded by this novel is in the crystal-clear delineation of Edward and Bertha Craddock. The novel skilfully depicts their marriage of passion and hate and ends with a striking but convincing picture of Mrs. Craddock finally free of her intolerable bondage to her oafish husband. Since both the Craddocks are somewhat detestable, the novel lacks warmth and charm, but it possesses vigor and reality. It deserves greater recognition than it has received.

*Of Human Bondage* has been read by millions. One of the most successful autobiographical novels ever written, it follows the main events of the author's life up to the last section, in which the hero achieves the sort of marriage the author desired at the time he was writing the novel. Since the end is an exercise in wish fulfilment, it has never impressed readers so deeply as have the earlier sections. The primary interest is perhaps Philip's search for a satisfactory philosophy of life, which he finally attains; the scene in the Elgin Marbles room of the British Museum in which he arrives at answers to his tormenting questions is one of the most moving scenes in modern fiction. Maugham answers these questions in the same way many years later in *The Summing Up* and *The Writer's Note Book*. The author of this article recently asked Maugham how much his religious views had changed since he wrote *Of Human Bondage*, and he promptly replied, "Not at all."

*The Moon and Sixpence* (1919) was his first popular success, although ironically it lacks nearly all the elements considered necessary in popular fiction. Most of its early readers knew nothing of Gauguin,

whose fantastic career suggested the story. Here is the classic portrayal of the genius who sacrifices everything—comfort, security, family, honor, health—to his art. Nothing else matters. The tragic ending, the painful cruelty of Strickland, the absence of romance and idealism, the despicable women characters—all would militate against its popularity. But Maugham's skill as a storyteller is so compelling that one must follow through this absorbing tale to its end. And, almost miraculously, the reader forms a measure of admiration for Strickland, who places above everything else the necessity for living his own life in his own way, and he succeeds. To him life is not a failure. *The Moon and Sixpence* is an unforgettable novel.

The fifth novel one would mention, and it is the author's favorite, is *Cakes and Ale*. It is a reader's novel: the sort of book most enjoyed by literate readers who know something of Meredith, Hardy, Walpole, and the literary scene in general, and who may enjoy the simple yet faintly literary style. It is not a well-constructed novel. The themes do not fuse well; the author frequently stops the narrative for caustic asides and remarks on a wide variety of subjects; for once Maugham happily ignores his own advice: "Stick to the point." He has pointed out that the French with their love of precision have always been annoyed by the formlessness of much English fiction, and *Cakes and Ale* has the sprawl and tangential excursions that distress French critics. The satire is brilliant and sometimes cruel, the humor is exquisite, and the characterization is subtle. Although Maugham continues to deny that Driffeld was drawn largely from Thomas Hardy, the two have much in common. The devastating portrait of the unctuous literary opportunist, Kear,

excited as much comment in England as did Driffield. It is now well known that Hugh Walpole sat for this delicious, needling portrait and that he was furious when the book appeared. Those who knew Florence Hardy and the first Mrs. Hardy agree that neither bore the slightest resemblance to Driffield's wives. *Cakes and Ale* is worth reading if only to permit the reader to savor the rich humor of Rosie's hilarious and natural remark which brings the book to an end.

If these five novels are Maugham's best, there are two others which approach them in excellence, *The Narrow Corner* and *The Razor's Edge*. The author has said that he received hundreds of letters from British and American servicemen who were apparently disturbed to find in the protagonist of *The Razor's Edge* a touch of themselves.

Maugham thinks that the prose drama is the most ephemeral of the arts and that practically all plays find their resting places on the library shelves after their brief day or few decades in the theater. That he is right is shown by the fact that, of the thousands of plays in English written in the nineteenth century, only a half-dozen by Wilde and Shaw survive with much vigor in the theater. Nevertheless, his assertion that no serious prose play has survived the generation that gave it birth is easily disproved; for example, the great dramas of Chekhov are now fifty years old. His assertion that, of his own thirty plays, only three or four high comedies will please future audiences is hard to dispute. They are witty, often wise, audacious, irreverent, unsentimental; the laughter they excite is more styptic than warm. But comedies of manners they are, and their survival depends on their success in amusing audiences after violent changes in the manners and surfaces of society

have taken place. The social revolution during the past generation is still modifying British living patterns so drastically that these social comedies are becoming period pieces. Already the glittering rhinestone world of *Our Betters* is as distant as that of *The School for Scandal*. Two of his other comedies will probably hold the stage for some time to come, *The Constant Wife* and *The Circle*. The latter has most firmly established itself as the classic comedy of manners of our age and is the most anthologized of all modern plays.

It is not likely that any of his serious plays will live on in the theater. *Smith, For Services Rendered*, and *The Unknown* have a corrosive bitterness unnecessary for the purpose of drama. It is possible that Maugham's last play, *Sheppey*, might at some future time find more enthusiastic audiences than it found in London in 1933 and in New York in 1944. It is the story of a kindly, lovable man too good for this world, and at the same time it is a slashing attack on religious hypocrisy and scientific nonsense. Many who saw the expert production of this moving play felt that the New York critics were unfair in a season when they were lauding *Winged Victory*, *Over 21*, *Outrageous Fortune*, and *Storm Operation*.

Maugham points out that the most financially successful of his plays is the one he did not write—*Rain*. Although he gave his short story to two friends to dramatize, he cannily retained a financial interest, and it is said that he has made \$300,000 from the play. No wonder he is sometimes referred to as the "Grand Old Businessman" of English letters.

There remain to be considered very briefly the books of travel and personal reflection. *On a Chinese Screen* is a collection of fifty-eight sketches of Chinese

life; perhaps it is the book of Maugham's containing the most compassion and humble appreciation of human goodness. What the French with delightful understatement call the "events" in Asia makes the book a good one to read today. *The Gentleman in the Parlour*, the author's favorite of all his books, is written with a difficult, simple elegance that stops just short of being too literary. The loving care with which the writer carved his sentences, the rhythmical prose, reflect his pleasure in his handiwork. *The Gentleman in the Parlour* is not merely an account of places in the East; Mandalay, Saigon, Haiphong, and the jungle are background against which human beings live out the drama and the dullness of their lives, working, suffering, enjoying themselves as people do everywhere. The book begins with an agreeable personal essay on Hazlitt, whose prose Maugham naturally enjoys and whose excellent essay "On Going a Journey" provides the title of the book. *Don Fernando*, recently revised but still one of the least read of Maugham's books, was even more a labor of love, for the author knew his audience would be small, however fit. It is a study of Spain in the Golden Age, the result of wide reading and his fascination by the literature, manners, religion, and eccentrics of the time. *Don Fernando* is a strange mixture of essays on art, aesthetics, drama, mysticism, and picaresque fiction. The comments on Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Calderón are sharp and lucid. His analysis of the art of El Greco should be studied by every student of painting. Maugham's famed cynicism is missing, and his treatment of the church and mysticism is tolerant and understanding and free of ironic comment.

*The Summing Up* is exactly what its title says: a summing-up of Maugham's ideas on literature, art, ethics, religion,

and philosophy—ideas he had for the most part already expressed. It contains a thorough self-analysis; not even Rousseau, Tolstoi, and Dreiser are more confessional in their books about themselves. Many who enjoy in *The Summing Up* the pages on English style and the theater feel that the section on religion is sophomoric. One suspects that Maugham would patiently reply that in knowledge of God, soul, immortality, death, and the meaning of life the sophomore is just as well informed as the college president. The book ends with a remark by Fray Luis de Leon: "The beauty of life is nothing but this, that each should act in conformity with his nature and his business." This is Emerson's "Trust Thyself," which fortunately someone preaches anew to each generation.

*A Writer's Notebook* is full of aphorisms, character sketches, thumbnail suggestions for long and short stories, travel notes, anecdotes, and essays on art, religion, and philosophy. Although the book is only a brief selection from the fifteen large volumes of Maugham's complete notebooks, one is struck by the author's extravagance—his failure to use hundreds of these situations and characters in his fiction. One must believe him when he says that he has always had at hand more plots than he could use. It is a book that will delight especially all readers who have themselves written or felt the urge to write.

In the beginning of the film *Quartet* Maugham addresses a prologue to the audience. Among other things, he says: "In my twenties the critics said I was brutal, in my thirties they said I was flippant, in my forties they said I was cynical, and in my fifties they said I was competent, and then in my sixties they said I was superficial. I have gone my own way, with a shrug of the shoulders,

trying with my work to fill out the pattern of life I have made for myself." Of the adjectives he lists, the one which has amused him most, and one suspects needled him just a bit, is "competent." The critics have bestowed upon the word a connotation of disapproval. Somerset Maugham has been ashamed of dulness and obscurity but never of competence. It is this competence, this sure knowledge of his craft, which may insure for him a position not far below the major writers of the past half-century and for many years to come keep at least a dozen of his books from idly gathering dust on library shelves.

## OTHER NOVELS BY SOMERSET MAUGHAM

- The Making of a Saint* (1898). A romance of medieval Italy.  
*The Hero* (1901). A satirical novel.  
*The Merry-Go-Round* (1904).  
*The Bishop's Apron* (1906). One of Maugham's few humorous novels.  
*The Magician* (1908). Maugham's attempt at the horror story.  
*The Painted Veil* (1925). British colonials in the Far East.

- Theatre* (1937). Amusing story of an unscrupulous actress.  
*Christmas Holiday* (1939). A young Englishman's exciting week end in Paris.  
*Up at the Villa* (1941). A short, readable pot-boiler.  
*The Hour before the Dawn* (1942). England in wartime—melodramatic.  
*Then and Now* (1946). Historical novel—Machiavelli and the Borgias.  
*Catalina* (1948). Spain during the Inquisition.

BEST COLLECTIONS OF MAUGHAM'S  
SHORT STORIES

- East and West* (1934).  
*The Complete Short Stories* (1951). Three volumes.

## FURTHER READING LIST

- Smith* (1909). Early satiric comedy.  
*Lady Frederick* (1911). Early comedy of manners.  
*Home and Beauty* (1919). A farce.  
*The Breadwinner* (1931). Maugham's last comedy.  
*Strictly Personal* (1941). Maugham's adventures in 1940.  
*The Vagrant Mood* (1953). Essays of literary criticism, including a masterly analysis of the detective story.

## The Modern Writer

RAY B. WEST, JR.<sup>1</sup>

JAMES JOYCE once said that he was not interested in the past, he was not interested in the present, he was interested only in the future. This is a puzzling remark when seen only in the light of his own work. Certainly Joyce was interested in the whole sweep of cultural history. His best-known work, *Ulysses*, is based upon a myth thousands of years old. Certainly he was interested in the past of his own country, for his work uses the Irish background as a basis for ex-

amining the action of his principal characters. If he was not interested in the present, why did he set his novel on a day in his own time, June 16, 1904, and why did he utilize places in Dublin so recognizable that they represent almost a guidebook description of his native city? What does he mean when he says he is interested only in the future?

The latter question can be answered only in terms of the large general intentions of art. A minor writer may be interested in imitating the achievements of

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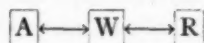
the past and the present. The major writer pushes on to what Hart Crane has called "new thresholds, new anatomies"—for the genuine artist sees not only the greatness of the past; he sees also its limitations. What he writes today is based upon the vision he has of the present, but if he is successful his vision becomes society's vision tomorrow. It is this vision, incorporated in a work of art—a painting, a symphony, a poem, or a novel—which Joyce had in mind when he spoke of his interest in the future.

But, of course, to say this much is only to define the first stage in the process of creation. For it is not only the vision itself which is important. There are also the methods—the techniques—through which this vision is rendered or—as some critics say—discovered. A reader will ask: "Why does Joyce's novel look so little like any other novel I have read? Why is the punctuation different? Why does he not tell me who is speaking? Why do characters appear and disappear without any apparent reason?"

Such questions are almost impossible to answer. In the first place there are so many possible techniques, and in the second place an author never consciously uses a technique. The word "technique" is a critical term, devised as a means of explaining how an effect is obtained—after the fact. Except in the first stage of composition, before any writing is done, while the author is still schooling himself in his craft, and again after the principal labor of creation has been accomplished, when the author is applying the final correction and polish—at these times only is the author consciously concerned with technique. The full labor of creation is concentrated upon the vision itself (the painter calls it his "image"). Achievement depends first upon the quality of concentration, then upon the ability to

render without spoiling either the concentration or the image. To be conscious of techniques, or of possible readers, or of anything extraneous to the concentrated vision would destroy or falsify the image.

To say this does not, I hope, make the process either mystical or magical. It is no more mysterious than the whole process of the unconscious, which is nevertheless mysterious enough. Sometimes, in an attempt to clarify this, I use the following diagram:



In the diagram the area *A* represents the author. Let us say that if he had perfect control of all his knowledge, conscious as well as unconscious, he might be said to have the intention of creating a certain work—the area *W*. If this intention were absolutely clear—and it is through what I have called "concentration" that it becomes clear—and if he were armed with a perfect control of technical means which he could utilize without spoiling that concentration, then he might conceivably re-create in the object *W*—the work—that image or vision which he contained within himself. He might then, conceivably, have created the perfect work.

I hope it is unnecessary at this point to say that an author never succeeds to this extent. Nevertheless, such an example might well represent his aim, and in any case examples are clearer if we conceive of them as "pure" and then proceed to measure actual cases against this concept.

However, the process is not complete at this point. If the work is a novel, or a poem, or a short story, it exists on paper as a series of symbols which we call language. Thus far it has been imagined into being for the author; it must now be re-imagined by the reader from the printed



symbols. Remember, we have had a perfect author, hence a perfect work. What we need now is the perfect reader. The author has projected his image onto the printed page. It exists there between the author and the reader—R. It is the job of the reader now to recapture the image through the medium of language. If he succeeds—and since he is a perfect reader he is bound to succeed—the image which he gains will be exactly the same image as that which the author conceived. Seen this way, the responsibility of the reader becomes only slightly less than that of the author himself.

"Very well," our reader may well reply, "but the authors I read seem intent only upon putting the greatest of difficulties before me. They seem to obscure, not elucidate, that image you speak of."

If this were true, all authors would certainly seem bent on self-destruction. However, there are difficulties which have to do with the limitations of the author, either his failure to imagine and to render or merely his limitations as a human being. No work completely succeeds—or can so succeed. On the other hand, if we grant this limitation to the author, we must also confess similar limitations in ourselves as readers. Isn't it, perhaps, possible that we do not always know enough to perform wholly that portion of the process which we alone can perform?

I am thinking now of our predisposition to see everything—to judge everything—from the point of view of the conventional and the familiar. We have seen that the kind of experience that art represents is a new experience—a new vision. One of the chief qualities of art is freshness, for art exists in time as well as in space. Only the very greatest artists defeat time, and then only in a relative degree. The genuine expression of art

must be conceived afresh, and its impact must come with the immediacy of a never-before-known experience. If we do not leave ourselves open to fresh impressions, or recognize them only in the great works of the past, we are missing a whole area of aesthetic enjoyment.

But this does not answer the question of what it is the author does in order to make such enjoyment available. In general, as we have seen by our diagram, he does whatever he can do, and what he can do is done through language. His very style may suggest certain values, as Ernest Hemingway's suggests the importance of concrete objects, ordinary events, and simple actions, while the more ornate sentences of William Faulkner reflect a value in the more complicated forms and manners of society. Joyce's stream of consciousness affirms the value of those sensations which lie, as Harry Levin has pointed out, barely above the level of the unconscious: sensations which do not come in the usual, logical sequence but come as the result of their association with other sensations.

There is a point, however, beyond which no genuine artist can go. He cannot *imagine* the experience of the work for the reader. The difference between imaginative and unimaginative writing lies exactly here. The imaginative work calls always—even upon successive readings—for the fullest possible play of the reader's imagination. Great works, such as *War and Peace*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, *Moby Dick*, and *Huckleberry Finn*, continue to engage the reader time after time. Virginia Woolf, in a famous essay entitled "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," concluded that what was wrong with Arnold Bennett was that he wanted the reader to imagine his scenes for him. Caroline Gordon and Allen Tate, in their book *The House of Fiction*, have pointed

to this distinction by examining closely examples of writing by Somerset Maugham and Stephen Crane. Mr. Maugham, they find, gives the reader too much—he allows too little room for the reader to share in the process of imagining the action or the scene. Stephen Crane forces the reader to participate, to recreate in his own mind this shared experience. As Henry James wrote in his Preface to *The Wings of the Dove*:

The enjoyment of a work of art, the acceptance of an irresistible illusion, constituting, to my sense, our highest experience of "luxury," the luxury is not greatest, by my consequent measure, when the work asks for as little attention as possible. It is greatest, it is delightfully, divinely great, when we feel the surface, like the thick ice of the skater's pond, bear without cracking the strongest pressure we throw on it.

One means by which the writer demands such attention is by using language in new, sometimes totally unconventional, combinations. Or he may gain startling effects by presenting us with unaccustomed shifts in the angle of vision from which we view the experience. He may throw us momentarily off balance by saying one thing when he means another, which is to utilize one of the many forms of irony. But such effects are not used merely to confuse the reader. They are not used even primarily to shock him. They must, in the long run, become also a part of the structure of the work—they must become a means of "rendering" a scene in such a manner that the complexity of the experience (despite the possible simplicity of the scene itself) may become *shared* by the reader.

The term "complexity of experience" might well be one to make a certain kind of reader pause. It is an expression which occurs often in modern criticism. "And what," he might ask, "if the reader does not see experience as complex?" What he

would mean, no doubt, is that there are degrees of complexity. In English literary history we see the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries as, each in its own way, seeking a relatively simple expression, taking a more straightforward view of life, than did the seventeenth century or does our modern age. This does not mean wholly that complex experience is reflected by complex forms, for to believe that would be to fall into what Yvor Winters calls the "fallacy of imitative form." But it may mean—to use simple examples—that a generation which sees simplicity or stability in experience will also put a high value upon simplicity or stability in its art forms. In one sense, then, the respect of the eighteenth century for fixed forms reflects an attitude of confidence in a stable society; the interest of the nineteenth century in the natural evolution of the common man is reflected in a descriptive and didactic literature addressed to a wide audience. The seventeenth century, its stability upset by Copernican science and an influx of rediscovered knowledge, reflected—as does our own age—its uncertainties and qualification in a literature of paradox and conceit.

To say as much is not to say that each age does not carry something over into the next. It is not to say either that a complex-minded age such as our own does not have its simplicities. Most Hollywood movies and much popular fiction reflect the tremendous desire many of us have to escape the "realities" of complexity, just as the Elizabethan bear pit must have represented an escape from the "realities" of Shakespeare's theater, as well as the "realities" of life.

But our problem is not with escape but with engagement, with the problem of making the literature of our own time available to as many readers as possible.

It is my opinion that the chief difficulty is not so much one of recognizing the techniques by which the experience to be shared is created but an overcoming by the reader of his own prejudices. How many times have we not heard it said: "I have always intended to read *Moby Dick*, but I cannot get through the early chapters." The implication here is that Melville's novel would be worth reading if we could only put up with the perversities of its author. But even such an attitude is better than the one which says: "Why did Melville clutter his book up with all that difficult language?" For the implication here is that Melville failed. Such an attitude, when expressed without adequate knowledge, is arrogant, and it all but precludes understanding.

But by now Melville is a somewhat simple case. What about more recent novels? Even here the informed reader will be extremely cautious in making assumptions of failure. If the style or the structure of the work seems experimental and the reader brings to his reading a certain perception and a certain knowledge of how effects in literature are gained, and if the methods seem excessive in relation to this particular work, then he may suspect that the work is a failure—that it represents novelty, not true originality. This is, of course, a "loaded" statement. Just what do we mean by "a certain perception" and "a certain knowledge"? Let us consider the case of William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, a novel which utilizes apparently radical devices to tell its story.

*The Sound and the Fury* begins with a long opening section presenting events out of time order, with puzzling associational shifts from one time to another, and all limited to the sensory perceptions of a thirty-three-year-old idiot. It is unlikely that any reader, coming across it

for the first time, would get anything more than a vague idea of the relationship of one event to another. The second section is not much clearer. It presents the stream-of-consciousness perception of a character bewildered by a confusion of values who is about to commit suicide. In Section III the time sequence of events becomes clear, but the tone shifts and the pace quickens. In Section IV all is resolved, but the inexperienced reader may well wonder why he has been conducted on so mad an excursion. He has a clue, of course, in the title, taken from one of Macbeth's best-known speeches: Life "is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Yet Faulkner's novel is not a mere illustration of Shakespeare's statement. It is also an ironic comment upon it. If the reader understands music, he will see that Faulkner's method is close to that of a musical composition, where themes are introduced in isolation or in simple combinations, then developed and worked into the total structure in a series of "movements" of varied length and tone. The reader will come to see that the isolated sense perceptions of the idiot boy in Section I are a better guide for conduct than the lengthy sophistries of his neurotic brother in Section II. He will see, too, that the author is utilizing a significant contrast between the life of the old and the new South and that much of what the novel has to say is related to these differences.

But I do not wish to make too much of technical innovation. Often what seems the most novel is, in actuality, merely the revival of something old. What this means can be seen best, perhaps, in the writing of modern poets. If we consider the writing done primarily between the end of World War I and the beginning of World War II, we can say—as, indeed,



we have already implied—that our poets were greatly influenced by their rediscovery of the metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century and by their reading of the poets of the French *symboliste* movement.

We have already suggested what these attitudes mean in their relationship to the seventeenth century: that the Renaissance vision of life as complex, reduced better to paradox and conceit than to simple statement, seemed, during the period between the wars, nearer our own view than did the more self-satisfied and straightforward views of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They mean also that the associational and impressionistic methods of French symbolism appeared a truer reflection of the way man engages himself with the world than either the rhetorical regularity of the most skilful eighteenth-century verse or the lyrical simplicity of most nineteenth-century poets.

This explanation has been given so often that it is almost embarrassing to repeat it. Yet so long as there are readers puzzled by the attitudes and techniques of such modern poets as Pound, Eliot, Crane, Auden, Stevens, Cummings, or Tate, we can suppose repetition is necessary. To it may also be added the warning that, by the time the reader has mastered such poets as these, he may very well find that the next generation has turned elsewhere. I hope I have made clear, however, that such searching is not done frivolously. I do not wish, either, to imply that there is any one single key to a complete understanding. We live in an age which delights in "keys" and solutions and "how-to-do-it" formulas.

A reader should have his own likes and dislikes—his own personal preferences. These are a human necessity and lend

color to his reading and thinking. What he should avoid, only, is prejudice—the holding of unconsidered opinions. To condemn William Carlos Williams or E. E. Cummings because their lines do not look familiar on the page or because they use words in an apparently new way is to display ignorance of the process by which poetry has always evolved. A poem may be *proved* obscure by careful reading, and there are more obscure poems written and printed every year than clear ones, but, once the poem is in print, the burden of proof is upon the reader. It may take several readings of Cummings' "A Man Who Had Fallen among Thieves" for the inexperienced reader to discover that the poet is merely telling an old story in a modern setting and with the intonations of contemporary speech. But surely this is little to expect.

Of course "The Man Who Had Fallen among Thieves" is a short and relatively simple poem. What about the longer works: *The Waste Land*, the *Cantos* of Ezra Pound, or *Paterson* by William Carlos Williams? *The Waste Land* is by now a fairly obvious case. When it first appeared, reviewers solemnly considered the possibility that it was a literary hoax. Today it is read intelligently by undergraduates in many of our colleges. The *Cantos* present a special problem, because they remain unfinished and because the relation of Ezra Pound's subject matter to his poem remains a controversial topic. Nevertheless, that it is a poem to be taken seriously, we must believe until convinced otherwise on grounds other than our feelings about the author's past actions or his present sanity or insanity. That real enjoyment may be gained from its individual parts is certain. Consider this single stanza from one of the late cantos:



The ant's a centaur in his dragon world.  
 Pull down thy vanity, it is not man  
 Made courage, or made order, or made grace,  
 Pull down thy vanity, I say pull down.  
 Learn of the green world what can be thy place  
 In scaled invention or true artistry,  
 Pull down thy vanity,

Paquin pull down!

The green casque has outdone your elegance.

Tennyson observed a flower in a crannied wall, Ezra Pound an ant within the compound where he was kept prisoner; and if it were necessary to choose between the two images, Pound's would seem the more pertinent as well as the more beautiful.

*Paterson* by William Carlos Williams is a very new work. It has been in print in its entirety for only about two years. That it is being conscientiously read we know from the amount that has been written about it, and, whether or not it is a completely successful work, it provokes the curious mind by the degree of its originality. It may also puzzle even the experienced reader, so that he asks: "Why does Williams refuse to give us clues as to whether the main character or speaker of the moment is the city, the river, a man, or a woman?" My answer—a tentative one—would be that he does give clues but that there are times when the speaker is intentionally unidentified. I am not prepared to say that Williams always succeeds, and I suspect that he does not, but what he attempts is extremely interesting. Certain passages are clearly the expression of the poet, the city man, the physician, who is at once the man *and* the city. Sometimes the city speaks as the man; at other times the man speaks as the city. As a technique this might be seen as an expansion of the paradox of the metaphysical lyric, as when John Donne has man yearning after a woman who is the church—the bride of Christ—as well as a common

prostitute. Williams seems to be attempting to merge the personal aspects of the lyric with the mythical qualities of a larger form, something very close to a modern epic.

Williams has written that art "is bred of the effort to take that momentous step into the imagination." We have asked the question: "Why do writers write?" We have also asked: "Is it to trick the public?" We might answer both questions by saying that a writer writes in order to trick the reader into seeing experience in a fresh light. He does not perpetrate a hoax, for a hoax is pointless, and too many years of discipline go into the writing of a novel, a poem, a story, to believe that a writer would dedicate his life to such labor in order to fool his contemporaries. Williams has also said: "If you write skilfully enough, sooner or later someone is going to find out and judge you for it." And we might add: "If you write badly, you will be found out too."

Let us consider a final example—one upon which I feel as a reader upon reasonably solid ground. Eliot's *Four Quartets* appeared in 1943. It is a work less well known than *The Waste Land*. It is my critical opinion that the *Four Quartets* will eventually come to be considered the better of these two long works. But there is a certain presumption in making such a claim. I would certainly not object to anyone making the contrary statement. *The Waste Land* was a revolutionary work, which we have come to see as marking the serious beginnings of modern poetry. As such it has a special "historical" significance. It was read first as a document of despair. We read it today both as a foreshadowing of the direction Eliot's verse was to take later in *Ash-Wednesday* and in the *Four Quartets* and as an example of a new use of lan-

guage. As Miss Helen Gardner has stated it:

Mr. Eliot approaches the problem of how the greatest thought can be expressed naturally, that is with the ring of the living voice, by concentrating on the problem of how we may "call a servant or bid a door be shut." If we can discover a poetic rhythm in the most commonplace speech, this rhythm may then be capable of refinement and elevation so that it may accommodate the greatest thoughts without losing naturalness.

The mood of *The Waste Land* emphasizes depravity and loss. In the *Four Quartets* Eliot attempts to depict not only the limits of man in nature and time but the extent of his hope and his faith. It is both a personal poem, in which the author examines his own background and the historical accident which caused him to reverse the emigration of his ancestors from England to America, and a public, religious, and philosophical poem. In it the dominant concerns of our age (man's relation to nature and his relation to god) are given a remarkable degree of formulation.

"How do we know this?" the reader will ask. We know it by reading the poem. "And how does one go about reading the poem?" Yes, here's the rub. We are doomed to know less about this particular poem than our grandchildren will know, and the best advice I can think to give is to say, "Read it as though you were born twenty, or thirty, or fifty years later than you were." Read with the knowledge of the usable past, but think of the contemporary work as though it were already a part of that past—as indeed it now is, now that it is in print. Time works rapidly, eliminating the inferior work and establishing the successful. André Gide has written: "I write my books so slowly that I often let the epoch catch up with me until I seem

to be borne along by it, whereas I was originally reacting against it."

Perhaps we can make such a view clearer by saying that, when one of our first ancestors discovered the regularity of the sun and the moon, he had made an artistic discovery. When he went beyond this and attributed to the sun and the moon supernatural powers, made gods of them and worshiped them, he was expressing his complicated need for order in a world where natural forces overwhelmed him. He expressed his belief that order superseded disorder. He created an imaginative world which controlled psychologically the fear and uncertainty which he felt in his daily living.

Perhaps if no artist had appeared among subsequent generations, our race could have continued to exist upon the basis of such beliefs. The next artist to appear, however, probably began by feeling that so simple an explanation did not answer the complex questions which existence posed, even in so simple a society. The chances are that this second artist, who arose to challenge the complacency of his elders' views, was driven from society. The chances are, also, that the ideas which this artist (this "prophet") was crying were the very ideas adopted by succeeding generations. For he may have told them that the moon was no goddess, the sun no god, that both were merely the expression of a greater, unseen order which existed beyond the universe of Man. He may, even, have fashioned images of the original force, which came to represent for his people symbols of the order beyond sight which they believed the author of all order.

My point here is that the artist is both a myth-destroyer and a myth-maker. It is he in society who first recognizes the inadequacy of the old forms and who

feels an irresistible impulse to strike nearer the heart of the truth. In our own day (and by "our own day" I mean the era of modern man) we have come to think two things about human experience. One is that mankind is capable of conceiving of some kind of almost-ideal order. Another is that man is incapable ever of achieving such order. Therefore, the artist is ever hopeful and ever defeated. If he were not hopeful, he would

not create; if he were not defeated, there would be no need for creation after him. The artist is he who sees clearest the possibilities of existence, and it is he who is doomed to struggle most strenuously to achieve the impossible.

We should bear with him, but we won't. We shall continue to look back at the old familiar forms, and we shall leave it to our grandchildren to discover the new—in the old.

## *Literature and College Teaching: An Outline of Method*

NORMAN FRIEDMAN<sup>1</sup>

WHILE there is almost certainly universal agreement among teachers of literature as to the primary aim of their efforts—to bring the student to a closer acquaintance with, understanding of, and affection for their subject—there is just as certainly no general concord as to the means thereto. And, indeed, a discussion of means quickly splits itself off into at least three areas roughly corresponding to the three aspects of the aim sketched above: the historical, the analytical, and the inspirational methods. It is apparently a question of emphasis; human limitations being what they are, no one can do everything, and each teacher chooses according to his lights that method which appears to sacrifice the least in terms of the triple aim. The historical approach proposes to present its materials as facts organized within a chronological frame so that each literary work is seen in the context of its conditions—biographical, cultural, philo-

sophical, political, and so on—and usually hazards some generalizations as to the collective qualities of movements and periods; the analytical aims primarily to take as its subject matter the relational problems presented by the individual work, a more or less complex organization of component parts, and considers it as generating its own meanings and furnishing its own context; and the inspirational aims at arousing interest through the medium of the instructor's tone and manner, the teacher himself providing the context, as it were.<sup>2</sup>

The objections to each of these methods when applied too exclusively are readily apparent. The historical approach tends to divert attention from

<sup>2</sup> For a good example of the inspirational theory see Calvin D. Linton, "Teaching the Heart of Literature," *College English*, VII (1945), 93-97: "The first obvious requirement . . . of a properly taught literature course . . . is a deep, constantly growing appreciation of his subject by the instructor. Many shortcomings . . . may be overlooked if the enthusiasm of the instructor shines through."

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the original objects of study—the poems, plays, stories, and novels themselves—confronting the student with heavy-weight anthologies containing feather-weight selections from the classics; the analytical often neglects historical perspective, tending to degenerate into an arid jargonism which leaves the student bewildered; while the inspirational, beginning where it should end—with a feeling of approval for the work—often fails to inspire, being based upon a vagueness in the use of terms such as to leave the student wondering what he should do or say about it.

On the other hand, none of these methods and their associated subject matters are in themselves objectionable, since their effectiveness is due in large measure to the way in which each is handled. If inspiration were to be coupled with precision of thought, if analysis were to be divested of its technological diction and historical innocence, if literary history were to be shorn of its predigested generalizations and its taxidermic textbooks—then each would offer fascinating problems to the student.

Since our purpose would suffer should any one of these methods be discarded, it would seem that, although we cannot do all three at once, we can do them one at a time—at least when it comes to history and analysis. And since, therefore, any sequence which managed to combine them would be certainly more fruitful than either alternative when taken alone, we might consider further the possibility that perhaps there is one sequence more fruitful than another. As for inspiration, there is no necessary reason why the historian and the analyst cannot be equally enthusiastic about what they are doing—so long as they know what they are doing. We can accordingly derive two kinds of subject matter which a teacher of lit-

erature can handle—facts (information) and relations (insight)—and two ways of handling them—by lecture (deductive formulation) and by discussion (inductive investigation). Now it is obvious that, just as the historian ultimately needs to be an analyst of particular works and the analyst must be a historian, relations cannot be discussed for long without a consideration of the facts being related, nor can investigation proceed without some preliminary formulation of what is being investigated. You do not turn students loose on a poem in a vacuum.

The question is: Which is it better to do first? The lecture course which packs and ships so much ticketed knowledge by the month, the discussion course which leaves the student dizzy from the quantity of hot air—these are obviously lacking something. There are consequently four possibilities: (1) either first to run discussion groups or (2) lectures; (3) either first to consider history or (4) analysis. As for points (1) and (2), it is doubtful whether the student will be able to discuss anything without having had some lecturing to begin with; and, as for the second pair, it might be questioned whether he will profit from a consideration of historical contexts without first having learned to read specific works of literature themselves. The logical conclusion as to sequence, therefore, would seem to be: (1) formulation of the grounds of analysis; (2) investigation by the student in class discussion and written work; (3) lectures on the facts and principles of literary history; and (4) investigation thereof by the student himself. For obvious reasons I take the first and second points to be the proper emphasis for nonconcentrating undergraduates; the third and fourth, for majors and graduate students (who will have already



progressed through the first two). Of course, freshmen and sophomores are not to be spared historical information when the occasion arises; nor will concentrators and graduate students, in the course of this sequence, come to their history wholly innocent of how to analyze individual poems, plays, novels, and stories.

It is the purpose of the remainder of this paper to outline a method for encompassing the first two steps—that is, a program for introducing freshmen and sophomores to the analysis of literature. Several misconceptions should, however, be cleared away at the outset. One of the commonest objections the analyst meets—from the greenest undergraduate to the most hoary-headed of professors—is that “dissecting” a poem both kills the poem and spoils the fun. Literary works were surely “not written to be studied but to be enjoyed,” recently argued an eminent historian: “We do not study a chocolate nut sundae.” Leaving aside the falsity of the analogy—pleasure in literature is usually a by-product rather than an end—the analyst might reply that a very complicated set of mental operations would be initiated if the sundae should turn out to be sour. There is also a question being begged here: if “study” and “enjoyment” are really opposites after all, then we as teachers have all put ourselves summarily out of business. But surely man, even the student variety, is capable of more complex pleasures—pleasures which involve considerable effort. It is high time for a change of metaphors: analysis need be neither a scalpel nor a wet blanket.

A closer look at the scalpel image itself will reveal that the figure is curiously unsuited to its intent: the surgeon’s knife is, a moment’s consideration demonstrates, an instrument of healing rather than destruction, and, if it were to be viewed

as being applied to the student’s mind (its proper object) rather than the poem, it would lose its pejorative tone. Analysis provides tools for removing our mental blocks rather than operating tables upon which we stretch poems for dissection.

But why not the metaphor of the map? Analysis aims to chart the routes by which a student may guide himself on his journey through literature, routes which are not prefabricated substitutes for the journey itself. “In a general way it has long been recognized,” wrote a teacher of literature some sixty years ago,<sup>3</sup> “even by those not specialists in the subject, that there is little profit in requiring students to memorize observations from textbooks about literature, or biographies of authors, or circumstances under which masterpieces have been composed. Clearly they must go to literature itself; they must get their acquaintance with books and authors and circumstances as nearly as possible at first hand. . . . [Interpretation] is not a question of fact to be made out through other men’s observations and judgments, as of historical happenings ages ago. It is a matter of personal discernment, and all the data are present in the pages of the author himself.”

Not memory, then, but insight should be the goal of an introductory course; not the accumulation of facts but the grasp of significant relations. Not where the teacher has arrived but rather how he

<sup>3</sup> Lucius Adelno Sherman, *Analytics of Literature* (Boston, 1893), pp. vii, ix, *et passim*. This text is an interesting pioneer in the field lately plowed by such people as Brooks and Warren in *Understanding Poetry* (1938, 1950), *Understanding Fiction* (1943), and *Understanding Drama* (1945, 1948); Fred B. Millet in *Reading Drama, Reading Fiction, Reading Poetry* (all 1950); or Gordon and Tate in *The House of Fiction* (1950). While these latter offer valuable tools for classroom use, I feel nevertheless that there is still need for a more systematic development of the logical sequence in the order of questions to be raised.

has gotten there; not a tourist's description of the places he has visited but advice on how to travel. Not what to see but how to look; not answers but questions.

And all answers about literature depend ultimately upon one basic question: What do we think literature is—its matter, its form, and its end? Whatever questions we may ask derive ultimately from our first answer to that first question. The critical point in any method, therefore, lies in the logical relation between its questions and its basic assumption; the assumption determines the question, just as the question determines its answer. Thus, for example, if we define literature as a neurotic symptom of the emotional disturbances of its practitioners, we can only ask such a question as: What are the clues to the latent meanings which the author has managed to submerge beneath the manifest surface of his poem? Or, if we define it as a vehicle of the poet's philosophy of life, we can only ask: What is he obviously trying to say here? Or as a means of self-expression and self-revelation: How does the work reveal the poet's personality, the sort of life he had? Or as the individual voice of the collective psyche, the historical moment: How does this poem reflect its conditions? Or as a tradition of techniques, modes, and themes: What does this poem share in common with others like it? What different? Or as a mystical outpouring over which the poet has or should have no control, I suppose the only question we can ask is: Isn't it remarkable?

The analyst, however, works on something like the following assumption: literature, however mysterious its ultimate origins in the poet's mind and/or background, is characterized by a high degree of control—whether mostly deliberate,

mostly intuitive, or equally both—which makes it amenable to analysis in the light of its given end. This end, I submit, is to organize the symbol (significant form), an image-attitude-idea complex, a fusion of abstract and concrete, which results in a heightened insight into and understanding of man's threefold relationship with himself, with others, and with his environment. And it is distinguished from philosophy, history, science, or religion—modes of discourse with which it might otherwise become confused—by virtue of an organizational quality whereby the "meaning" neither exists for the sake of the "picture" nor is placed above it in importance but rather emerges from the structure of the work itself. That is to say, a work of literature is composed of *materials* (however derived), more or less complexly *organized*, so as to produce certain *significances*.<sup>4</sup> The questions which the analyst can ask are accordingly, following a logical inductive sequence from the part (simple and specific) to the whole (complex and general): (1) What is it made of? (2) How is it put together? (3) What does it mean? For convenience they can be categorized, respectively, as description, analysis, and interpretation.

The method translated into classroom procedure should begin, then, with the instructor formulating the logic of assumptions, questions, and answers as

<sup>4</sup> Cf. George Arms and Joseph M. Kuntz in *Poetry Explication* (New York: Swallow & Morrow, 1950), pp. 9-24. "Explication, as we anglicize it, is easy to recognize but difficult to define. Literally it means unfolding, and this meaning still inheres. A more formal definition is: the examination of a work of literature for a knowledge of each part, for the relation of these parts to each other, and for their relation to the whole" (p. 18). The analyst may, of course, entertain different assumptions as to the end of poetry. The Chicago critics, for example, assume that it is to arouse pleasurable emotions.

sketched above. Ideally speaking, and depending upon his Socratic abilities, he should encourage his students to suggest various possibilities—through discussion, exercises, and written work. Whatever the results, he and the class should eventually emerge with a clearly defined set of analytic questions to serve as the basis for further investigation. These should then be applied in detail as a group activity to works assigned in advance;<sup>5</sup> and the class should then proceed to works as yet untouched in order to apply the questions and derive the answers for itself. One way of motivating discussion is to have a quiz on a question assigned in advance relating to one of these untouched works and then to have the students exchange papers and debate the range of answers. The instructor will possess the further advantage of having a palpable basis for assigning grades as a measure of achievement to supplement his personal impressions.

What follows is an outline of suggested procedure. Analytical terms are derived from the three major questions and are intended to provide a set of principles—or, to use the map analogy, a set of travel directions—which will act as a common starting point for the examination of literary texts.

#### DESCRIPTION

Since we have defined the end of literature as the production of the symbol, it follows therefore that we may classify the possible range of literary materials under the headings of abstract (nonsensory elements) and concrete (elements potentially perceptible to the senses), which, when taken together, comprise the sub-

<sup>5</sup> Since they must be considered as wholes, each work should be studied in its complete form only; it is probably wisest, therefore, to begin with short poems taken one at a time.

stance of the symbol itself. Abstract elements can be either conceptual (ideas) or emotional (attitudes), while concrete elements (images) can be either literal (actually present in the situation developed by the work) or figurative (not present in the situation but rather brought in as the vehicles of some significance not otherwise available to the materials already in the work). The literal elements may be further subdivided into images of person, place, and situation; while the figurative images may be classified traditionally as metaphors, similes, personifications, metonymies, synecdoches, and so on. It should be pointed out, in addition, that, although poetry usually focuses primarily upon figurative imagery, it will also contain important literal elements; and, conversely, that, although drama and fiction are almost always primarily literal, they may also contain important figurative patterns.

Presented in outline form, then, the first question will look something like this:

#### I. What is it made of?

##### A. Literal imagery.

1. Person. In poetry, even where no "characters" are involved, there will always be present a "speaker" at least.
2. Place. The settings, scenes, atmosphere, etc. Poems frequently may have no specific location in space.
3. Situation. What is happening? There are several characteristic situations even for poems which are apparently wholly metaphorical:
  - a) Dialogue—two people converse within the poem.
  - b) Monologue—the speaker addresses either another person in the poem who remains silent or the reader.
  - c) Soliloquy—the speaker meditates aloud to himself.

##### B. Figurative imagery. Here the task is to

identify the figures of speech and to indicate their function.

- C. Attitudes and ideas. Here we separate *what* the poem is about from *how* the speaker(s) feel(s) about it.

#### ANALYSIS

If the symbol be defined as a fusion of abstract and concrete, we have next to examine the means whereby such an end is effected. We are concerned here with the way in which the materials of literature are organized in formal relation, and we assume that fusion involves disparate materials (thoughts, feelings, sensory perceptions) somehow arranged so as to work together. From this "togetherness" we derive our formal principle as pattern and variation, for the artist achieves form by setting himself limits beyond which he cannot venture and then by striving to exceed them. Out of this tension and conflict he effects a resolution which is largely responsible for whatever pleasure and insight the work produces in us. Now while a discussion of part-to-part and part-to-whole relationships—the examination of structures—can be grouped in accordance with the headings already established, the mode of constructing pattern itself will constitute a new heading and will require different questions for each literary type; for poetry, drama, and fiction have each their own characteristic limiting principles and organizing techniques.

The techniques, or methods of supporting and rendering tension, most characteristic of poetry can be subsumed under the heading of "Word and Line Structure," which in turn can be divided into meter (conflict between speech stress and formal stress, between metrical unit and thought unit), rhyme (conflict between sense and sound, a means of arousing and deploying expectancy), diction (tension between tone,

word, and intent), and organizing principle (is the poem shaped to fit a pre-existing stanzaic pattern? is it shaped according to the internal development and evolution of its images, attitudes, and ideas? or is it a combination of both?).

The characteristic technical problem of drama is the disposition of its story materials into articulated units and the means of connection, continuity, and sequence thereof. There are four aspects of the problem: structural blocks (the overall pattern of situations within the play), exposition (conveying information necessary to the plot regarding events which predate the opening situation), progression (partial hints and submerged anticipations of the oncoming course of events), and organizing principle (What end is the disposition of events made to serve? Is the play arranged so as best to serve that end? Has the tension between simultaneously withholding and unfolding the end been adequately balanced?).

And the technique of fiction encompasses all this plus something more. With the reappearance of the disembodied speaking voice, narrative structure is concerned with the speaker-story-reader pattern, which involves the following four questions: To whom does the reader listen (author in first or third person, protagonist or witness in the first, or no one)? From what angle is the story viewed (periphery, center, front, or shifting)? What kinds of information does the reader have access to (author's thoughts and perceptions, characters' thoughts and perceptions, or merely speech and actions of the characters alone)? What is the distance between the reader and the story (near, far, or both)?

Coming back now to the remaining questions regarding structure which these forms share in common, we have next to



consider imagery structure. In poetry we ask whether the images are opposed stanza by stanza (or whatever the unit might be), or developed and resolved as the poem unfolds, or both (considering literal and figurative images together this time); in drama how the characters, settings, and actions are opposed according to the central conflict of the play (Is there any character development? Do the protagonists experience a discovery? Is there a genuine peripety in the action?); and the same questions obtain in fiction plus how the narrator functions in relation to the over-all structure of the story (What specific ends does he serve? What would be lost without his presence? What is gained with it?).

And the third question pertains to the structure of attitudes and ideas. In what kinds of emotions and concepts are the characters involved? What are the relations among these elements? Is there a significant shift in or resolution of values as the work evolves?

The outline summary appears thus:

## II. How is it put together?

### Poetry

#### A. Word and line structure

1. Meter
2. Rhyme
3. Diction
4. Organizing principle

### Drama

#### A. Scene and act structure

1. Structural blocks
2. Exposition
3. Progression
4. Organizing principle

### Fiction

#### A. Narrative structure

1. Narrative vehicle
2. Angle of view
3. Available information
4. Distance.

### All Three

#### B. Imagery structure

#### C. Structure of attitudes and ideas.

## INTERPRETATION

According to the basic assumptions outlined above, the significance of a literary work is a function of the arrangement of its materials; what it "means" can rarely be equated with any given conceptual statement that it might happen to contain but rather with statements and actions and places and metaphors and characters and emotions operating in relation to one another. Interpretation, that is, focuses upon the nature of the image-attitude-idea complex which the work has organized. Thus we summarize, as it were, the results of the two foregoing steps—description (*what* has been arranged) and analysis (*how* it has been arranged)—and emerge with an outline of the central relation which the work has generated among its materials.

This relation can be discussed, therefore, in terms of theme (a concise prose summary of the nature of the conflict among attitudes and ideas around which the work is built) and symbol (a summary of the imagery structure as it corresponds to the terms of that conflict). The assumption here is that an image (whether literal or figurative) can become a symbol (that is, a vehicle of significance) by virtue of its associations with the other images and the attitudes and ideas the work contains.

The outline concludes, then, like this:

## III. What does it mean?

### A. Theme.

### B. Symbol.

- C. Relationship. The idea structure tells us what is being opposed to what, and the attitude structure tells us which way it is going.

By way of illustration, consider Tennyson's *Ulysses*. I take the thematic conflict to be defined as desire versus limitation, and the corresponding images as staying home (limitation) versus going

away (desire). The journey thus comes to symbolize the fulfilment of man's insatiable thirst for knowledge. One may note that the same theme-symbol relationship is arranged according to an entirely different outcome in Dante's *Inferno*, Canto XXVI. Or that a similar symbolic conflict in Donne's "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning" serves as the vehicle for a similar theme, but that the relationship is reversed (going equals limitation).

The usual fate of methods and systems is that they rot from within as their de-

fects, the qualities of their virtues, begin to be supplanted as ends for means. Our aim is understanding, and its by-product pleasure, but even an analytical system can quickly become a substitute for its own purpose when it is regarded tactlessly as something final and complete. I can conclude only by warning that the method as herein incompletely developed is to be taken as neither definitive nor prescriptive and by hoping that, as it grows in precision and completeness, it will also become correspondingly more catholic and useful. The poem is all.

## *Reading Improvement for Adults*

ERNEST W. KINNE<sup>1</sup>

FOR three years Purdue University has been conducting a reading-improvement program, known on the campus as English X, or "Developmental Reading." In 1950-51 the course, consisting of two one-hour laboratory periods, was opened to two hundred and fifty students each semester. Because of demand, a second reading laboratory was opened in 1951-52, thus doubling the capacity to five hundred students each semester. Although the course was at first aimed at reading improvement for freshmen, a considerable number of upperclassmen and even some graduate students elected it. From the first, English X has been taken by students whose scores on beginning tests range from the lowest to the highest; but the seriously retarded readers are sometimes referred to the Reading Clinic for special treatment.

In the spring of 1951 we decided to open the laboratory to adults. Two evening classes were organized for graduate

students, full-time faculty members, and faculty wives. Ranging in age from twenty-two to fifty-one, the average age in these first evening classes was thirty-two. The educational backgrounds varied considerably, but, of the thirty adults who took this course, nine were Ph.D.'s, eleven had Master's degrees, and the others (with the exception of two faculty wives) held Bachelor's degrees and were actively engaged in work on advanced degrees (see Table 1). In the spring of 1952 two similar groups met again two evenings a week for fifteen weeks. In the spring semester of 1953, however, an adult class from one of the local industries met once each week for a two-hour period rather than the two nights a week of the previous adult classes. We do not have enough experience as yet to determine which schedule is the more effective for such groups.

In 1952-53 the program was expanded with another reading laboratory at the Indianapolis Extension Center of Purdue

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University. In the fall semester (1952) thirteen adults were enrolled, and this spring twenty were in adult classes at one to fifty-eight years; six were between forty-one and forty-nine, while only one was over fifty.

TABLE 1  
FACULTY GROUP AND GRADUATE STUDENTS, PURDUE UNIVERSITY, 1951

	SURVEY TEST					HARVARD TEST*	
	1a	1b	2	3	4	Speed	Comprehension
Age group 22-28:							
Beginning.....	329.12	76.25%	52.25	32.25	74.37%	264.50	74.37%
Final.....	482.25	88.25%	55.37	33.00	85.90%	363.87	73.75%
Gains.....	153.13†	12.00%†	3.12	0.75	11.53%†	99.37†	- 0.62%
Age group 32-51:							
Beginning.....	324.25	85.00%	56.25	33.50	89.62%	280.37	75.00%
Final.....	457.50	89.37%	55.75	38.00	89.75%	369.13	83.75%
Gains.....	133.25†	4.37%†	- 0.50	4.50†	0.13%	88.76†	8.75%†

\* The Harvard Reading Test, designed to measure skill in reading difficult material in the social sciences, was also given at the beginning and the end of the course.

† Indicates significant gains.

Indianapolis. The ages ranged from twenty-three to forty-eight. These classes met for thirty hours of instruction two periods a week, with the exception of the Medical Center group, which had a ten-week course consisting of thirty hours of class instruction. The Indianapolis Extension Center also developed an Executive In-Plant Program for ten weeks from January to April, 1953, with two one-and-a-half-hour meetings per week at the Cummins Engine Company, Columbus, Indiana. It was planned to have four sections with six students in each section. Unfortunately, several individuals who completed the course otherwise could not take the final tests to measure gains in reading speed and comprehension; however, beginning scores and final scores on speed and comprehension for thirteen employees of this plant are available (see Table 2). The ages of these industrial executives ranged from thirty-

At the beginning and at the end of the instruction the Survey Section of the Diagnostic Reading Tests (usually referred to as the Triggs Test) was administered. This test gives results in five aspects of reading skill:

- 1a. Speed in words per minute
- 1b. Timed comprehension based on twenty questions
2. Vocabulary (total number correct out of sixty items)
3. Timed plus untimed comprehension (total correct out of forty questions)
4. General comprehension on a scale of 100

The differences between the beginning and the final averages are a measure of reading improvement.

While, as previously stated, the statistics for the adult group at the Cummins Engine Company were incomplete because some executives in the program could not complete the final tests, the two most important scores on the Survey

Section of the Diagnostic Reading Tests are available for thirteen individuals (Table 2).

From the Extension Center at Indianapolis, the data show that the younger group, however, had a decided advantage over the older group (Table 3).

Since we had data on ages for only 52 students equally divided into the two age groups shown in Tables 1-3 (adults being rather self-conscious on this vital statistic), we cannot, of course, draw any

TABLE 2  
INDUSTRIAL EXECUTIVES

	Speed	Comprehension
Age group 31-41:		
Beginning.....	245.71	72.14%
Final.....	470.00	70.00%
Gains.....	234.29*	- 2.14%
Age group 46-58:		
Beginning.....	256.83	80.00%
Final.....	414.00	81.66%
Gains.....	158.17*	1.66%

\* Indicates significant gains.

very definite conclusions about age and relative reading improvement. In both the industrial group and the faculty and graduate groups we found good readers and below-average readers among both the older and the younger adults. Clearly many more classes and a much larger sampling would be necessary before any definite pattern could be determined. In general, one may conclude that the older adults responded somewhat more slowly in gains in speed but had a slight advantage in comprehension. Such results might have been expected, but it should be repeated that we have not sufficient data to draw any very definite conclusions.

Perhaps even more revealing is a comparison between the adult classes and the undergraduate classes at Purdue. In the three-year period we have given the English X course to over two thousand students. In that time we have had 108 adult students in separate classes. On the whole, the adults compare very favorably with the average performance of the younger students, belying the old saw about teaching an old dog new tricks.

During the second semester, 1952-53, for example, the Department of English gave instruction in reading skills in twenty-two divisions of English X. The enrolment of 475 was composed largely of freshmen, with a fair representation from other classes. Again the differences between the beginning and final averages of the Survey Section of the Diagnostic Reading Tests and the Harvard Reading Test are used as a measure of reading improvement (see Table 4).

On the Triggs Test the average gain by the adult students was 164.21 words per minute and a 4.72 per cent gain in comprehension as compared with the 162.42 words per minute and 1.54 per cent gain in comprehension, respectively, for the undergraduates. In over-all comprehension the undergraduates gained 6.16 per cent, while the adults gained 4.26 per cent. With the Harvard Reading Test the younger students had a slight advantage in gains in speed, but the adults had a higher initial and final comprehension score. Again the results would appear to indicate that age does not materially influence reading achievement. For a more detailed comparison of results for the total enrolment in "Developmental Reading" over five semesters see Table 5.

At this point a brief explanation of our instructional methods might be in order. During the first week we give the two reading tests indicated above. In the final



week similar tests of entirely different content but of like difficulty are given as a check on individual gains. Each intervening week we use a short essay from "Selections for Improving Speed of Comprehension," generally referred to as the

"Harvard Essays," as a quick check on speed and comprehension of rather difficult authors like John Stuart Mill. Naturally these results may fluctuate from week to week, but there usually is and should be a gradual upward trend. In ad-

TABLE 3  
ADULT GROUPS AT INDIANAPOLIS EXTENSION CENTER

	SURVEY TEST					HARVARD TEST	
	1a	1b	2	3	4	Speed	Compre- hension
Age group 23-28:							
Beginning.....	259.75	81.50%	47.75	32.00	79.75%	235.75	61.25%
Final.....	440.00	85.00%	53.00	31.50	84.50%	383.75	71.25%
Gains.....	190.25*	3.50%*	5.25*	- 0.50	4.75%*	148.00*	10.00%*
Age group 32-48:							
Beginning.....	218.40	69.00%	38.40	27.60	66.00%	199.20	65.00%
Final.....	298.60	82.00%	39.80	30.80	70.60%	266.00	68.00%
Gains.....	80.20	13.00%*	1.40	3.20	4.60%*	66.80	3.00%

\* Indicates significant gains.

TABLE 4  
COMPARISON BETWEEN ADULT AND UNDERGRADUATE CLASSES

	SURVEY TEST					HARVARD TEST	
	1a	1b	2	3	4	Speed	Comprehension
Undergraduates							
Beginning.....	274.27	76.92%	43.52	30.05	73.64%	211.81	59.13%
Final.....	436.69	78.45%	49.74	30.05	79.80%	393.44	64.21%
Gains.....	162.42*	1.54%	6.22*	0.00	6.16%*	180.63*	5.09%*
108 Adults							
Beginning.....	272.12	73.71%	45.78	29.81	74.12%	229.48	68.00%
Final.....	436.33	78.43%	45.30	31.09	78.38%	370.77	67.50%
Gains.....	164.21*	4.72%*	- 0.48	1.27	4.26%*	141.29*	- 0.50%

\* Indicates significant gains.

dition, we use the Harvard film series on alternate periods of the week for still another test on speed and comprehension. These films are graduated to increase in speed each week and to assist the students in improving their reading rhythm

more advanced films. In other words, it is possible to show the first film at 180 words per minute, a very slow speed, and by the end of the semester to increase the speed, gradually of course, to 700 words per minute for the faster readers of the

TABLE 5  
A COMPARISON OF GAINS ACHIEVED IN "DEVELOPMENTAL READING"\*

	SURVEY TEST					HARVARD TEST	
	1a	1b	2	3	4	Speed	Comprehension
First semester, 1950-51:							
Beginning.....	263.10	79.20%	47.0	30.2	77.10%	206.2	58.02%
Final.....	429.84	74.72%	49.7	29.64	79.08%	356.32	58.66%
Gains.....	166.74	- 4.48%	2.7	- 0.56	1.98%	150.12	0.64
Second semester, 1950-51:							
Beginning.....	296.19	80.66%	49.41	31.93	81.36%	227.37	64.29%
Final.....	447.37	82.06%	52.39	31.51	83.90%	376.63	68.12%
Gains.....	151.18	1.40%	2.98	- 0.42	2.54%	149.26	3.83%
First semester, 1951-52:							
Beginning.....	266.23	77.50%	47.52	31.10	78.63%	214.59	56.91%
Final.....	374.04	80.65%	48.98	30.52	79.50%	345.15	61.42%
Gains.....	107.81	3.15%	1.46	- 0.58	0.87%	130.56	4.52%
Second semester, 1951-52:							
Beginning.....	257.33	78.82%	42.71	30.65	73.36%	225.06	60.19%
Final.....	399.58	80.28%	50.39	31.40	81.79%	380.06	62.42%
Gains.....	142.25	1.46%	7.68	0.75	8.43%	155.00	2.23%
First semester, 1952-53:							
Beginning.....	256.79	76.59%	42.71	29.65	72.37%	214.90	55.88%
Final.....	396.23	78.92%	47.48	29.71	77.19%	366.67	57.92%
Gains.....	139.43	2.32%	4.76	0.06	4.81%	151.77	2.04%

\* This comparison shows rather consistent gains in speed. Increases in comprehension occur occasionally, and the survey gains for the first semester, 1952-53, seem to be most favorable. There is an indication here that comprehension is improved to some extent; at any rate, it seems quite clear that the gains in speed are not achieved at the expense of comprehension.

and in increasing the width of eye span so that a line of print is read with two fixations, as they are called, by the time the last two films in the series are shown. To accommodate the fast and the slow readers in the class, most instructors show these films at two speeds that vary from 100 words per minute with the first films to 150 words per minute with the

class who have developed their reading skill at that rate.

Part of each period (we try to use at least half of the class hour) we have what we call "free reading." From our reading shelf of about two hundred books and several current magazines, each student makes his own choice. Both books and magazines are rated for difficulty of vo-

cabulary and sentence structure and are graduated in words per minute for the reading accelerator. This simple device, sometimes called the "reading pacer," has an opaque shutter that descends over the page and is adjusted to the reading rate of the individual student, a rate which has been determined by his beginning tests. Each week we encourage the student gradually to increase his reading rate on the accelerator. By the end of the semester many students double their reading rate without loss of comprehension, much to their amazement, and a tripling of speed is not an uncommon occurrence. We also encourage the student to read more difficult books as the semester progresses. He may begin with light fiction and conclude with biography, history, or popular science. If he desires, he may read Henry James, a book on Einstein, or Winston Churchill's latest memoirs. For the benefit of the more ambitious students, we have the reading laboratory open for ten additional periods each week, when regular classes are not in session, in order that they may have more time for practice on the reading accelerators.

Following our first two years of experience with the course in reading improvement, some of those who had pioneered in this work and the dean of the Graduate School decided that we needed an enlarged course especially for graduate students. First, the committee in charge combined the techniques described above for developing basic reading skills with a seminar somewhat like the Great Books courses, a class that was to meet three hours each week for two semesters.

Of necessity our program for the fall of 1952 was tentative. We decided that the graduate student should be encouraged to read extensively outside his specialization. Since most students in science and

technology admittedly are weak in the humanities, we started with several chapters from Plato's *Republic* and then read more extensively from Plato such dialogues as the *Apology*, *Phaedo*, *Crito*, and *Symposium*. Following Plato came chapters from Aristotle's *Politics* and *Ethics*. After a few weeks devoted to these ancient, yet to our students new, philosophers, they were ready to do some additional reading of their own and to lead several stimulating class discussions. From there we traced political thought through Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Rousseau's *Social Contract* and *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality among Men*, Locke's *Of Civil Government*, and De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. We concluded the semester with John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, and as an additional fillip we read Marx's *Communist Manifesto*. While one student chose to write an essay on Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, two others wrote sharp criticisms of Marx that would have pleased even Senator McCarthy.

The outside reading assignments in the second semester were more varied than those of the first. We read generous selections from Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* and used two books from the "Twentieth Century Library" (Scribner's), Lloyd Morris' *William James* and Jerome Nathanson's *John Dewey*. These logically led us to the original writers, and we had discussions of Dewey's *Human Nature and Conduct* and William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*. We dipped into Freud, reading his lectures entitled "The Origin and Development of Psychoanalysis"; following this our graduate student in psychology gave us a clearer insight into Freud. We concluded with Alfred North Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World*. Obviously

this reading list is flexible and can be altered from time to time to suit the needs of individual groups of graduate students.

By general agreement this was a stiff dose of reading, but the students emerged from it with a clearer understanding of some of the minds that have so greatly influenced our century. As one student put it, "Why haven't we read such books before? Why so late in our educational careers?" Perhaps with his greater ma-

turity, however, he can bring much more to the reading of Plato, Darwin, or William James than he could have five or ten years earlier. Meanwhile, in using the Harvard films and essays and accelerators for constant practice, we found that the graduate students maintained the same relative gains as the other students in "Developmental Reading" had achieved. From this experience we feel that here is an approach to the problem of reading improvement for adults.

## *Why "the" Source Theme?*

FRANCES ELDREDGE<sup>1</sup>

AND, of course, the source theme," added twenty-seven of the thirty-seven directors of the freshman "writing" course whom, as a Faculty Fellow under the Fund for the Advancement of Education, I interviewed in 1951-52. In only four or five of the thirty-seven colleges across the United States had the people in charge of writing for freshmen worked out a procedure for teaching the investigative paper through a series of papers based on reading rather than the usual one-great-chore which exhausts freshman and instructor more surely than it exhausts the library's resources on the volcanoes of Hawaii or Swedish holiday cookery.

Yet is not the ability to compose a paper based on materials gathered from a variety of written sources just as dependent upon habit as the ability to outline, to arrange one's thoughts in intelligible paragraph units, to "be specific"?

To judge from the comments of pro-

fessors of history, economics, political science, sociology, psychology, art, and some of the sciences in the same thirty-seven colleges and in my own college, the investigative paper is indeed, as English departments have ordinarily assumed, one of the chief kinds of writing a student is expected to do throughout his upper-class courses. As "the term paper," it is one of the main tasks in which he is repeatedly called upon, at least once in every semester, in at least two out of five courses, to gather, weigh, and outline rather complicated and diverse materials; to weave them into intelligible paragraphs presenting the specific evidence for his conclusions; to draw his conclusions; and also to document his sources adequately.

Students across the country told me this year that outlining and "learning how to write a source theme" are the two procedures from "freshman comp" which have meant most to them in their later work in college. Yet people teaching economics, sociology, political science, and the rest tell me that they assume

<sup>1</sup> Rockford College, Rockford, Illinois; since September, 1953, Pennsylvania College for Women, Pittsburgh.



their juniors and seniors have forgotten whatever they once may have learned about gathering a bibliography, making usable notes, and handling documentation consistently. Regularly, year after year, these professors spend a class hour going over with their advanced classes principles of investigation and acceptable forms (which they often make available to students on mimeographed sheets). A few professors here and there have abandoned the requirement that sources be acknowledged. In a few situations, professors have abandoned the investigative paper itself, in despair over the fact that it usually turned out to be the merest patchwork.

Wherever professors have given up the term paper, or assign one only infrequently, the four recurrent objections to the average term paper are (1) that the student merely pastes together data from dogged reading, without having thought over and synthesized what he has learned in the gathering; (2) that the student has not really posed a problem to which in his paper he addresses himself and to which he tries to work out a solution or through which he poses a new set of problems; (3) that the student is at a loss how to draw on anything in the library beyond the card catalogue and perhaps an encyclopedia or two; and (4) that the student is at sea on "whether we have to have footnotes."

With one exception, in every college I know, practice in composing a paper from investigation among written sources is assumed, quite rightly it appears, to be one of the main direct contributions made by "freshman English" to the work of the college as a whole. Yet only in comparatively few of these same colleges is this "practice" so handled as gradually to build up a habit. In most, the "practice" still consists in devoting a

good part of one term to what the freshman is often erroneously allowed to think of as an "exhaustive" treatment of his subject. This running-down of the resources in the college and town libraries, with all the attendant conferring on narrowing the subject, methods of note-taking, and consistent handling of footnotes, ordinarily results in a 20-25-page (I have been told of a 45-page) paper which kept the student up all night before the date due and which the instructor is loath to tackle.

Two and a half semesters later, in his junior year, the student is baffled as to how to work up a bibliography for his term paper in sociology; and his economics professor decides that term papers aren't worth the time they take, since too many of them turn out to be unwieldy blocks of quotation, yoked by violence together, or inadequate summaries, at best only soldered, not synthesized.

The "practice" of composing in the freshman year one sizable source paper apparently is not, for the average student, adequate "practice" to leave a residue of assurance about appropriate procedures when he is faced in his upper-class courses with the necessity of working up a term paper.<sup>2</sup> To put it in other words, the course which is kept an almost universal requirement for the B.A., in part because it is thought an essential form of preparation for doing adequate college work, has not given the student sufficient preparation in composing the

<sup>2</sup> The fact of the great hiatus in the sophomore year, when students (in most of the colleges studied) are very seldom asked to write connected discourse except on occasional examination questions, is a strongly relevant problem. I touched upon this problem as part of the panel on "The Relation of Freshman Composition to Written Composition in Other Courses" at the national Conference on College Composition and Communication in Chicago on March 13, 1953.

one kind of paper which he is most frequently asked to write in his upper-class courses.

Several years ago, in reconstructing the course at Rockford College, I concluded that if students were to be helped by Rhetoric 101-2 to be ready, among other things, to write the kinds of papers due in their upper-class courses, they needed to practice an increasing amount of writing based on reading, particularly on reading in the exposition of ideas. Granted all the best that can be said for encouraging students to write from their immediate experience, still, as Wilma and Charles Kerby-Miller long ago pointed out,<sup>3</sup> the chief procedures that students are asked for in their college writing are to analyze, give an account of, define, discuss, criticize, account for, describe, compare, and contrast. Certainly all these procedures are relevant to that thoughtful examination of written sources essential to the original synthesis which professors of political science and art history and psychology are always hoping to find in more than a few term papers.

Wherever courses in "Humanities" or "Western Civilization" or "Freshman Studies" (or even "General Education A-h") have undertaken to assimilate the aims of "freshman English" into the study of interrelated materials from history, philosophy, and literature, the principle of writing based upon reading has necessarily been adopted. Among the many colleges where a more traditional "freshman English" course is retained, a few have gradually worked out at least enough writing based on reading to give freshmen something that can fairly be

called *practice* in drawing upon source materials. It is genuine practice in that it provides the freshman with opportunities for gradually drawing into relation, synthesizing, more and more material from sources studied and for coming gradually to perceive the need for differentiating and acknowledging those various sources.

The most thoroughly thought-out program I have ever come across appeared in these pages in January, 1938. In the college edition of the *English Journal* (XXVII, 60-65) Mary E. Burton, of the University of Louisville, presented "The Evolution of an English Problem"—her ingenious process for working through the student's curiosity from more limited and simpler problems to more extensive and more complicated problems. Her effort to solve the problem of getting vitality as well as soundness into the source paper still seems to me even more valuable than the procedures I found at Mount Holyoke, Wellesley, and Flora Stone Mather of Western Reserve. At these colleges work is being done in various valuable ways to carry the student from combining oral and written sources from her more immediate experience and using picture sources (Mount Holyoke) or from developing a topic from evidence in one work of nonfiction studied by the whole class (Wellesley and Mather) to using gradually more extensive materials.

Because comparison of materials read is crucial to gathering material effectively and to thinking about it for one's own purposes, at Rockford College, by at least the beginning of the second semester, I ask students to write such exercises in comparison of materials available to the whole class from our book of readings as a rather slight essay comparing Stevenson's concept of the "idler" with

<sup>3</sup> "New Type of Composition Course," *English Journal* (college ed.), XXVI (November, 1937), 715-25.

Carlyle's of "the idle man." With a capable class we may work on to the much more rigorous comparison of Arnold's and Huxley's views of the place of science in university education. This writing exercise, like the former one, is based on materials studied in our textbook and discussed at some length by the whole class. After some practice with such materials, accessible to the whole group and readily acknowledged within their own essays—"Huxley agrees . . ."—we go on to a problem which combines turning to one kind of essential source book and drawing close comparisons, with the salutary discovery that even encyclopedias may disagree or at any rate differ. Taking a cue from an excellent exercise in the Jefferson, Goldman, and Glenn *Progressive Study of English Composition* (Odyssey, 1941) I send students off to compare accounts of the life of some controversial figure like John Paul Jones or Warren Gamaliel Harding or Savronarola. For this they are to use only one indicated encyclopedia, one biographical dictionary, and one other source selected by the student after examination of the bibliographies in these references. Here the very assignment (which, following earlier work, specifies point-by-point comparison from the three sources, not that block comparison which leaves most of the work to the reader) and also the fact that no two members of the group are working with exactly the same reading provide a "natural" way of guiding the student to the necessity of indicating distinctly in her report which source disagrees with another on which points. Again, it seems "only natural" to weave acknowledgment of sources into the fabric of one's own essay—and, for purposes of comparing findings in the classroom, it

proves convenient to have page references and a few exact quotations handy for use when questions of interpretation arise. The usefulness of being clear on one's sources and being able to acknowledge them begins to be apparent as questions arise from other members of the class.

It will be evident that thus far the work involves chiefly explicit comparisons, provides little opportunity for drawing conclusions other than the simple results of the evidence—"Up to this point the sources agree; on these and these points they diverge in such and such ways."

To bring in an element of *why* the divergence, I have sometimes spent considerable time in class reading aloud and distinguishing between Plutarch's account of Caesar's funeral and Shakespeare's handling of these materials in Brutus' and Antony's funeral orations. On the basis of this rather close work (which delights the students, partly because the Shakespeare speeches are familiar to most of them), I send them off to work on transformation of historical data by the poet: Part I of *John Brown's Body* with encyclopedia accounts of John Brown (this works well for the students who claim they "don't know much about literature"); Browning's *Fra Lippo Lippi* or *Andrea del Sarto* with Vasari's lives and an encyclopedia account; perhaps Shaw's *Saint Joan* with an account from a biographical dictionary. No masterpieces of literary analysis emerge from this study, of course; but, with guidance in group meetings of just the members studying *Fra Lippo Lippi* or just the members studying *John Brown's Body*, and conferences as desired, most students profit by this inquiry into the transformation of historical data into

coherent character or situation significant for the author's purpose (or for the impression his work seems designed to produce on us).<sup>4</sup>

Now the student has had practice in comparing divergent points of view on one topic; she has had experience in using the more obvious biographical dictionaries and encyclopedias with the leads from their bibliographies; she has learned something about the limitations of her own knowledge and of her library (she can't read German—out goes that article with the promising title; her library lacks the early numbers of that periodical referred to in the *Britannica*); she has begun to discover the usefulness to herself of accurate notes and the usefulness to others of clear acknowledgment of the sources she has used; she has begun to interpret significant differences.

I am indebted to Robert Warnock's *Using Good English* (Scott, Foresman, 1950) for an exercise which becomes the first step in the final paper in this series. To familiarize students with the use of periodicals, Warnock sends them to the library to browse among current magazines until they find three topics about which they would like to learn more. From this initial exercise we go ahead to working up a bibliography of not more than six sources through the use of periodical indexes, *Facts on File*, and appropriate special reference books. Emphasis is placed on using periodical sources, in order to give the student practice in hunting them down; but relevant books may be used if the student finds them more adequate to her needs. The

other chief emphasis is upon the process repeatedly stressed as the absolute essential of a valuable term paper by people teaching upper-class courses in a wide variety of subjects: handling the chosen topic as a problem or a series of problems for which evidence is to be collected and compared, and from which some conclusion is to be drawn: not "Television Today" but "Is television harmful or helpful to children of school age?" It is urged that, especially with contemporary topics, the conclusion may often need to be a query, tentative: "It is too early yet in the life of television for us to predict whether the harmful effects will offset its developing educational values."

Such a program of habituating practice is planned to bring out successively the elements essential to what professors of advanced courses in most liberal arts subjects regard as term papers worth the time for posing a problem, modifying it during the collection of materials, turning it over in the mind, and coming to some conclusion. The tests of such a program are not, of course, the papers produced in Rhetoric 102 but the essay for History 237, "Was Luther's attack on Tetzel justified?" or the study for Political Science 319 of the teamsters' union as a political pressure group in Oregon, or the inquiry for Social Anthropology 312 into the part played by the Franco-American group in the development of a New England mill town. There seems some hope that at least such a program for the freshman course, because it gives repeated practice in the kinds of thinking needed and in the use of appropriate external forms, may provide a more adequate beginning than the traditional common emphasis on "the source theme."

<sup>4</sup> I try to make sure it is clear to the students that they are not using the historical sources actually employed by the poet or dramatist.



## Round Table

### TWO EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS IN READING

While a great many teachers have been troubled by the old myth that a pupil that has reached the age of fourteen has learned all the reading skills he is capable of learning, the English 601, or Freshman, Committee at the University of Texas has felt that reading can be taught on the college level and has therefore placed into the syllabus several exercises that require students to analyze, interpret, and judge a piece of writing. One assignment calls for summary sentences of all the paragraphs of an essay, another calls for a sentence outline of an article, and another for a *précis*. The syllabus suggests frequent quizzes on the substance of the essays and on vocabulary. It suggests other devices which require strenuous reading and exact expression, and we have been proceeding on the assumption that these exercises teach the student to read better.

Now, as you may imagine, there are two schools of thought in our department. There are those who say that these exercises are dull, spiritless, and unprofitable and that they blunt the students' initiative and originality. We may call these people, for want of a better term, "the romantics." They claim that a student's understanding of an essay or book stems from his interest, his delight—his *wonder*, to use a venerable romantic cliché. The "realists" point out that one of the professed major objectives of the course is to teach the student to read, to improve his reading skills; and they maintain that only analysis and strenuous reading can accomplish this end effectively. Analytical reading, they insist further, develops such a strong sense of order and form that it improves the student's writing. There is no substitute, they say, for hard work and attention to specific techniques; seeing the

organization of an essay and stating its thesis are of great value in training the student to understand, to interpret, and to judge.

Recently I persuaded the chairman of the Freshman Committee, Leo Hughes, to allow me to experiment with two freshman sections. Our plan was to teach one of three groups in the "regular" way, according to the syllabus. We decided to allow one of the two experimental groups to be relatively free in its reading—to depend on intellectual curiosity, spontaneity, and delight—and to require little outlining and written analysis. Oral analysis and critical discussion were to be the order of the day's recitation, and the students were to read more books than in the other classes. The second experimental section was to labor and sweat; more *précis* writing, more outlines, more statements of theses, more tests, more devices of all sorts were planned for them than our regular sections get. Our intent was to see whether this somewhat limited experiment would give us any hint whatsoever concerning the relative effectiveness of the three methods.

I entered into the project with open eyes and, I think, an open mind. I had perhaps a secret hope that the "free way" would prove just as effective as the other ways of teaching reading, or more so; but I also had within me a hardened slag of conviction that punctuation, sentence structure, or the theory of numbers are learned better and more enduringly by an arduous application of the mind. I conceded that reading also might require arduous application.

Allow me to record here a few clinical notes on the way the three classes were conducted:

*Free group (Section I).*—In this class we read more books than regularly required. Besides *Toward Liberal Education* (a book of essays), *Return of the Native*, and *Only Yes-*

terday, we also read *Henry IV (I)*, *Death of a Salesman*, and *Laughing Boy*. We had few pop quizzes, few written quizzes of any sort. The main business was the oral recitation, or discussion. I depended upon interest, curiosity, and the love of reading and discussion. We discussed ideas, psychological problems,

They were required to know the new words in their reading and were quizzed on them each time they were examined on the subject matter. We used objective tests distributed by the committee (tests on comprehension, interpretation, vocabulary). We analyzed essays in the usual manner by making summary sentences, by writing outlines, and by writing a précis.

TABLE 1

Section	Initial Test (DRT-A)	Retest (DRT-B)	Gain or Loss
Story Comprehension			
I.....	16.4444	17.3889	+ 0.9445
II.....	15.3157	17.6111	+ 2.2954
III.....	15.2307	17.9231	+ 2.6924
Vocabulary			
I.....	43.9444	44.5000	+ 0.5556
II.....	46.0526	46.6111	+ 0.5585
III.....	43.8462	40.3077	- 3.5385
Comprehension			
I.....	30.8333	30.3889	- 0.4444
II.....	30.7368	31.7778	+ 1.0410
III.....	30.0000	31.6923	+ 1.6923
Total			
I.....	74.7778	74.8889	+ 0.1111
II.....	76.7895	78.3889	+ 1.5994
III.....	73.8462	72.0000	- 1.8462
Words per Minute			
I.....	265.056	282.167	+17.111
II.....	302.211	307.778	+ 5.567
III.....	266.769	291.000	+24.231

organization. We did no vocabulary work; I urged students not to interrupt their reading to use the dictionary. The emphasis was upon matter.

*Regular section (Section II).*—We read what was recommended by the syllabus: *Toward Liberal Education*, *Return of the Native*, and *Only Yesterday*. Students were quizzed regularly when essays were assigned.

*Second experimental group (Section III).*

—I put these students through a brisk training, though we had no formal vocabulary exercises. I exhorted them to be curious about words in their contexts but made no check to see how curious they had been and requested that dictionary study be put off until their reading was finished. In other matters these students were kept busy and alert; they got some kind of reading exercise every day, an exercise designed to increase speed and comprehension. Problems concerning eye span, fixations, regressions, vocalization, and peripheral images were discussed. We often wrote a short précis of two or three paragraphs; we used the objective tests on the essays (disregarding the vocabulary tests). Though a great deal of emphasis was placed upon speed, most of the exercises were designed to increase comprehension: "getting the main point." We had the usual outlines and summaries. Techniques and skills were emphasized more than matter, though we read and discussed the same books and essays used in the regular section.

The University Testing and Guidance Bureau gave these three groups the DRT-A (Diagnostic Reading Test) soon after the beginning of the semester. (When the results were compared with the results of three other tests which all these students had taken earlier, it was clear that *Section II* was significantly superior in reading skills to *Sections I* and *III* and that there was no significant difference between the reading abilities of *Sections I* and *III*.)

The retest (DRT-B) was given at the end of the semester, the results of which were compared with those of DRT-A. The mean scores, prepared by the Testing and Guidance Bureau, are given in Table 1.

The following observations seem to be justified from a study of the table:

1. Section III made the best showing in everything except vocabulary (vocabulary work was purposely neglected in this section).
2. Section I made the poorest showing in everything except speed.
3. The negative score for Section III under "Total" is explained by the negative score under "Vocabulary."
4. Section II made the best showing in vocabulary, though only slightly better than Section I.

We make no claims for this small test, but we should like to see the test repeated, with some minor variations. In the meantime we shall regard our regular method of moderate strenuousness as perhaps the most satisfactory. There was no perceptible difference in morale in the three classes. Mr. Hughes's observation is as follows: "The results seem to indicate that the methods we have been employing in the teaching of reading are at least as effective as the others tried; in fact they prove better than the casual method of Section I. Attention should be called to the fact that the 'regular' group (Sec. II) was the best of the three to begin with, and it is usually, I understand, just such a group that will show the least striking improvement." It is his disposition, I am sure, to hold on to our present methods while we wait for further evidence.

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#### A SEMINAR EXPERIMENT

For a number of years the English department of Moravian College for Women in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, has required of its majors a seminar in literary criticism and research. Since most of these majors become

secondary-school teachers rather than proceeding immediately to graduate study, and, in fact, are practice teachers during part of the senior year, the seminar was recently expanded to allow for discussion of the problems encountered by these students in the classroom. Members of the staff, all of whom teach sections of freshman English, were invited to sit in on some of these discussions, as was the professor of education who places prospective teachers in their practice assignments. During the last two years several of the supervising teachers of the area have attended the seminar as guest speakers. It will be seen that the seminar thus has become a colloquium.

Our aim in all this may be summarized as follows: Like other schools, we require a year of composition as well as the sophomore survey of all candidates for the degree. The other courses required of our English majors, such as Shakespeare, a century course, and American literature, are naturally limited by their subject matter. Our practice teachers in English will soon be teaching secondary-school pupils some of whom will one day be college freshmen; and we hope to insure better teaching of these prospective freshmen by giving the practice teachers a final opportunity in the seminar to improve the quality of their own work. These sessions, moreover, have proved a not unwelcome variation from the basic subject matter of the seminar, which is the history of literary criticism. Discussions growing out of readings and reports thus are intermingled with sessions which offer the prospective teachers an opportunity to compare notes, ask questions, and receive constructive criticism before embarking upon their full-time careers.

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## Current English Forum

Conducted by the NCTE COMMITTEE ON CURRENT ENGLISH USAGE<sup>1</sup>

### SUCH AS AN INTENSIFIER

Within the last thirty years or so the use of *such* and of *so* as either quasi- or pure intensifiers (adverbs) has been labeled as "colloquial," or "weak," or "school-girl style," by many writers of handbooks, grammars, etc.<sup>2</sup>

My present study of the use of *such* as a quasi- or as a pure intensifier shows that it has paralleled the use of *so*.<sup>3</sup> This situation should surprise no one who has taken the trouble to look up the etymology of *such*. According to Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, "... Goth. *swaleiks* is simply compounded of *swa*, so, and *leiks*, and all the Teut. forms admit of a similar explanation. Thus *such* is for so-like, of which it is a corruption." Etymologically speaking, then, we should expect *such* to be used at times as a quasi-intensifier, at other times as a pure one, and on other occasions as a combination of one of these plus a comparison, which latter concept is either expressed in a following *as*- or *that*-clause or implied, the clause being omitted. The comparative element comes from prehistoric *liko* (MnE. *like*) through a form similar to Gothic *leiks*.

When I consulted the *Oxford English Dictionary* for data on the present problem, I

soon discovered that, while *such* has paralleled *so* in the ways already mentioned, the history of *such* is more complex. Had space permitted, I should like to have presented here considerable portions of the entries under *such* in the *OED*. But I can only summarize briefly the enlightening material assembled in Sections B. II. 13, 14, 14*b*, and 15 of the entries for *such*. Thus, under B. II. 13, the reader will find that, from 1100 to 1891, *such* has been followed by a dependent clause introduced by *that* plus *so* (*that*), or *that* plus *as*, etc., to express a consequence whose meaning is "so great, etc." Note here that the intensive tendency is present along with the expressed comparison in the following clause. Under B. II. 14, the *OED* editors state:

By suppression of the clause expressing comparison or relativity, *such* acquires an emphatic force = so great, so eminent, and the like.

The citations here range from 893 to 1849<sup>4</sup> and are of the type represented by this one from Macaulay:

*Hist. Eng.* x II, 600 Never had there been such crowds in the churches.

The entries under the next two sections (B. II. 14*b* and 15) in the *OED* bring us to the heart of our problem:

B. II. 14*b*. Colloq. Used as an absolute intensive, the implied clause of comparison being indeterminate and quite lost sight of.

<sup>4</sup> This does not mean that this particular usage ceased after 1849. The *OED* was completed in 1928. A supplementary volume was issued in 1933, but there is no entry for *such*, which fact indicates that the usage is still present. My comment here also applies to other dates listed in this article for materials from the *Oxford*.

<sup>1</sup> Margaret M. Bryant, *chairman*, Harold B. Allen, Adeline C. Bartlett, Archibald A. Hill, Kemp Malone, James B. McMillan, Albert H. Marckwardt, Russell Thomas, John J. Winburne, and Harlen M. Adams.

<sup>2</sup> For evidence of disagreement among early-nineteenth-century grammarians on the use of *such* see J. L. Hall's "Such as an Adverb," in his *English Usage* (Chicago, 1917), pp. 275-76.

<sup>3</sup> See my "Current English Forum" article, "The Use of *So* as an Intensifier," *College English*, May, 1951, pp. 453-54.



The citations date from 1553 to 1906, of which the following is a good example:

1849. R. Curzon Visits Monast. 417 They were marvelously cool and delicious, and there were such quantities of them.

Finally, under B. II. 15, the *OED* editors state:

Preceding an adj. used attrib. *such*, *such* *a* becomes adv. = so, so . . . a.

The citations range in date from 1522 to 1902, and they include instances where a clause of comparison follows *such* or *such a* as well as some where a clause does not follow. Two excerpts, one with a clause and one without it, will serve as illustrations:

1711. Addison *Spect.* No. 68 par. 3 If I were to give my opinion upon such an exhausted subject, I should join to these other qualifications a certain. . .

1848. Dickens *Dombey* xlii His visage was in a state of such great dilapidation, as to be hardly presentable.

My data for this study come mostly from American writers of the last twenty years or so. But there are examples in the works of such early writers as Edwards, Franklin, Thoreau, Emerson, Hawthorne, *et al.*<sup>5</sup>

When I began collecting data on this problem, I centered my efforts upon those types of locutions where *such a* (or *an*) is involved, for these are the types which have been branded as substandard, colloquial, etc. However, I soon discovered, especially after consulting the *OED*, that there were

<sup>5</sup> I also have a very good sampling of this usage from both recent and earlier British writers, most of the examples being of the type where there is little possibility of a comparison or of an implied clause. Among the writers represented are Shakespeare (*Comedy of Errors*, III, i, 164-67), Johnson (*Boswell's Life*, ed. Frowde, I, 564-65), Newman (*Apologia*, quoted in Church, *Oxford Movement*, p. 103), H. G. Wells, V. S. Pritchett, John Gielgud, W. H. Auden, D. W. Brogan, Edwin Muir, Stephen Spender, Virginia Woolf, and various anonymous writers for the London *Times Literary Supplement*, from which publication I quote this example: "... then the individual would have the sense of his social role which is *such an asset* of the ideological systems" ("Ideologies and Idea Systems," August 24, 1951, p. iii).

other types; so I included those where *such* is used without a following *a* or *an*. And, inasmuch as this problem centers upon the omission of an *as*- or a *that*-clause, I limited my data to instances where there is no such clause.

In classifying the materials, I found that they fell into three groups, as follows: In the examples under Group I, *such* is followed by one or more nouns; in Group II, *such* is followed by one or more adjectives plus one or more nouns; and in Group III, *such a* (or *an*, which occurs rarely) is followed by such a variety of constructions that it is impossible to list them in a short article of this kind. Furthermore, in each of these groups there are some examples (hereafter referred to as Type A) where a following *as*- or *that*-clause can be readily implied;<sup>6</sup> others (Type B) where such a clause cannot be too easily implied (i.e., there is room for debate or disagreement);<sup>7</sup> and others (Type C) where it is impossible to conceive that an implied clause exists.<sup>8</sup> It is in this last type that *such* is used as a pure intensifier, as will be seen from some other examples which I shall now list:

The essays of T. S. Eliot, which have had such an immense influence in our time, are, for example, fundamentally non-historical. . . [Edmund Wilson, "The Historical Interpretation of Literature," in *The Intent of the Critic*, ed. D. A. Stauffer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 41].

<sup>6</sup> The following excerpt illustrates this type in Group I: "There can be few authors of such eminence [as Poe] who have drawn so little from their own roots. . ." (T. S. Eliot, "From Poe to Valéry," *Hudson Review*, autumn, 1949, p. 329).

<sup>7</sup> This type may be illustrated by an example from Group II: "Man, who had such high hopes, is now deeply in trouble, and Niebuhr quotes the Psalms" (Erwin R. Goodenough, *Yale Review*, autumn, 1949, p. 163).

<sup>8</sup> Here I take an example from Group III, with the comment that the majority of the examples for this group fall under this type: "He [Beethoven] went to work for the future, showing in the process how terribly he had needed the language he launched; he had such a great deal to say" (John M. Conly, *Atlantic*, October, 1953, p. 43).

... his active nature and his gift for rendering it which made such an impression on the Hawthornes one evening in their parlor in Lenox [W. E. Sedgewick, *Herman Melville: The Tragedy of Mind* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1944), Introd., p. 5].

Under President Truman, who has such a clear conception of how to delegate authority, that cannot go on . . . [Walter Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow," *Marquette* (Mich.) *Daily Mining Journal*, September 24, 1945].

My belated obeisances for the magnificent story on Marian Anderson. It was so beautifully written (my guess would be Whittaker Chambers) and gave such a spiritual lift [Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, quoted in *Time*, February 10, 1947, p. 17].

Sales were lagging a bit, and it would be such a help [editorial, *Saturday Review of Literature*, March 26, 1949, p. 20].

If Shakespeare was the most popular playwright of his time, it was partly because he was such an amiable fellow with such generous instincts [Brooks Atkinson, "Twelfth Night," *New York Times*, October 9, 1949, Sec. 2, p. 1].

And yet Henri Michaux himself is such a deceptively gentle, gracious man, distinguished in every gesture and every articulation; perhaps this merely proves that his catharsis is effective [Justin O'Brien, in a book review, *Saturday Review of Literature*, December 29, 1951, p. 1].

Although in the passages discussed above we find contrasting views regarding the sufficiency of the native language, one viewing it as inadequate and in need of borrowing, the other as

adequate because of past borrowing, there is not such a great difference between them [Richard Foster Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1953), p. 92].

Perhaps the reader will be interested in a listing of other writers and publications where I found examples for one or more of the three groups and types mentioned above. Space does not permit complete listing or complete reference identification.

Francis Henry Taylor (December, 1948, *Atlantic*); T. C. Chubb (*New York Times Book Review*, September 23, 1951); J. H. Hanford (*John Milton, Englishman*, p. 79); Crane Brinton (*Virginia Quarterly Review*, summer, 1953); David Daiches (*Willa Cather*, p. 130); F. C. Matthiessen (*The James Family*, p. 72); J. W. Beach (*CHAL*, chap. xii); I. A. Richards (*Quarterly Journal of Speech*, December, 1949); B. A. Botkin (*Treasury of American Folklore*, p. xxi); Martha H. Shadford (*New England Quarterly*, December, 1951); and Mark Van Doren (*Nathaniel Hawthorne*, p. 131).

In view of my findings for this study, as well as those presented in my article on the use of *so*, it would appear that the authors of handbooks, grammars, manuals of style, etc., should bring their comments (whether in revised editions or new ones) on the uses of *such* and *so* as intensifiers into line with the facts of usage.

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## *Report and Summary*

### *NCTE College Section Notes*

MATERIALS AND RESEARCH Related to the improvement of reading are of direct concern to all College Section members, so that recent reports of two NCTE committees, the one on College Reading, the other on Reading on a Mature Level, have specific interest.

#### *Committee on College Reading*

The function of the Committee on College Reading is to edit and publish *Good Reading*, a descriptive, classified bibliography "of 1,000 books selected for solid worth and pleasant readability" for college students and other adults. Recently Atwood H. Townsend, New York University, chairman of the committee since its inception in 1931, reported that in the twenty-two years of the committee's existence, it has produced sixteen editions of *Good Reading*, with a total circulation thus far of nearly 700,000 copies, mostly among undergraduates. Present distribution averages about 50,000 a year. It has been the practice of the committee to prepare a complete revision of *Good Reading* every four or five years. Preparations have already begun for a Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition scheduled for 1955.

The Committee on College Reading, which began in 1931 as a self-constituted, independent group, became affiliated with the NCTE in 1933 and continues as a self-perpetuating unit with indefinite tenure instead of having a date of termination as is standard for all other Council committees. It does not take funds from the Council to cover expenses but contributes to the Council 5 per cent of its net royalties on *Good Reading*.

The first issues of *Good Reading* were published and distributed by the committee on its own responsibility. After affiliation with

the Council in 1933, its distribution was handled by the Council office. In 1947 arrangements were made for it to be published as a "Mentor Book" by the New American Library (then using the label of "Pelican Books"), and the scope of the publication was broadened to make it useful to adult readers as well as undergraduates. It is currently published by the New American Library of World Literature, Inc., under the sponsorship of the NCTE.

The present Committee on College Reading has sixty members, who are aided by an advisory board of distinguished authors, chairmanned by Carl Carmer.

#### *Committee on Reading on a Mature Level*

William S. Gray, University of Chicago, chairman of the Committee on Maturity in Reading, reports that that committee is absorbed in attempting to complete each of three studies on which it has been working the last three years. They include (1) a summary of previously published studies relating to the reading interests and habits of high school students, college students, and adults in general; (2) a questionnaire study of the amount and character of the reading of current high school and college studies, together with the demand which reading makes on them; and (3) a scale of maturity in reading with application to three adult groups. It will be several months before these projects are completed and the reports printed. Members of the committee in addition to Dr. Gray are: Lois Dilley, Rockford (Ill.) High School; Constance McCullough, San Francisco State College; and Mrs. Elizabeth Simpson, Adult Reading Service, Illinois Institute of Technology.

Associate members: Willard Abraham, Roosevelt College, Chicago; Grace Benscoter, Emerson School, Gary, Indiana; David Cameron, Evanston Township High School, Evanston, Illinois; Eona DeVere, Bureau of Curriculum, Chicago Public

Schools, Chicago; J. M. McCallister, Herzl Junior College, Chicago; Eason Monroe, 435 Dubace Avenue, San Francisco; David Russell, School of Education, University of California, Berkeley; Barriss Mills, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana, *ex officio*.

### *About Education*

THE JOHN HAY WHITNEY FOUNDATION last year initiated a visiting professors' program to make available to small, independent liberal arts colleges the services of twelve outstanding teachers who had reached the age of retirement. This fall the program was expanded to include six additional appointments. The grants are made for one year, but the colleges have been so pleased with the results of the program that several have provided funds for the visiting professors to remain. Moreover, so many distinguished teachers are available for inclusion in the program that the foundation has established a "Registry of Retired Professors." The information in the registry can be had without cost to colleges and universities that desire to engage at their own expense the services of retired professors. Address: 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City.

SIX RECENT COLLEGE GRADUATES, selected for their interest in college teaching as a career, have been appointed as teaching interns at Dartmouth College, and six others have been appointed at Columbia College, under the new program sponsored by the Ford Fund for the Advancement of Education designed to raise the standard of teaching in the undergraduate college and to attract first-rate people into the field of higher education.

THE NEW UNITED STATES COMMISSIONER of Education is Dr. Samuel Miller Brownell, who for the last seven years has been president of the New Haven State Teachers College and professor of educational administration at Yale University. He succeeds L. M. Thurston who died

suddenly after a few weeks in office. In an interview with Benjamin Fine of the *New York Times* he stressed that he ardently believes "in the need of a close working relationship between all segments of the teaching profession in elementary, secondary, and higher education."

THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION announced in November that its latest estimate indicates that enrolment in the nation's colleges and universities has risen 3.1 per cent this fall as compared with 1952. Thus two years in increasing college enrolments have followed three years of declining numbers.

A UNIQUE WAY OF AIDING PRIVATELY endowed American colleges and universities has been developed by the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. It will pay each such college \$3,000 for each graduate selected by the company for its own graduate training course, and it takes on more than a hundred such graduates each year. In the opinion of the chairman of the board, Eugene G. Grace, "The program offers a way for industry to give approved colleges financial assistance," and he hopes that "it may provide an increasing number of qualified graduates for industrial leadership."

THE DARTMOUTH FILM SOCIETY, its services, and its methods of operation are carefully described in the November *Films in Review* by J. Blair Watson, Jr., director of Dartmouth's office of audio-visual instruction. The purpose of the society is to review the history of the motion picture and study the social and technical aspects of the new art. Last year the society had 406 mem-



bers and ran two series, the foreign-language series and the historical film series. Film notes were written by students for every program. The society also helps out with program planning for various of the other departments in the college, particularly the language clubs.

A PLAN TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR gifted students to be excused from freshman English was initiated this fall at Syracuse University. All entering students who wish to take the special English test are permitted to do so. Those passing the test may take other courses of their choice, with the consent of their adviser.

AFTER A THREE-YEAR EXPERIMENT, American studies courses emphasizing an interdepartmental approach have become a permanent part of the curriculum at Wittenburg College, Springfield, Ohio. They cover the history and literature of the American Revolution, the Civil War, and the settlement of the West. History and English teachers take part in all sessions.

THE NATIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE for Educational Television recently reported that twenty-seven noncommercial television stations are expected to be on the air by the end of 1954. Two, at Houston and at Los Angeles, are already telecasting. More than a hundred other communities have well-advanced plans but no dates set for operation. However, unfortunately, in the other 132 cities where channels have been reserved, little progress seems to have been made. The most significant aspect of the past year's progress has been the demonstrated fact that it is possible, "under widely varying conditions and circumstances, to rally effective help, including financial support, from the public for educational television."

THAT READING OF MAGAZINES should be a part of school and college English courses is well emphasized by two writ-

ers in the mass-media issue (October) of *Education*. Earl Vance in "Periodical Reading Courses: Their Place and Function in American Education" and "Practical Procedure in Magazine Reading" points out that magazines are read much more than books, that investigations seem to show that school and college have in most cases not affected the choice of magazines by their graduates, and that many college students have no idea of the content of the best magazines. Since information of all citizens is essential to the health of democracy, it is important for schools and colleges to develop in students the habit of reading the better magazines. Vance himself does this with college freshmen by asking them to read six articles each week throughout the college year. All subscribe for the *Atlantic* and *Harper's*, but some of the assigned articles are from back issues of these or other magazines. Of course, discussion—almost entirely of content—follows.

"The Humanities, the Mass Media and the High School," by Patrick D. Hazard, points hopefully to new volumes of good writing in the pocket-book format as signs that there is now a bigger public for good writing than ever before. Inexpensive reproductions of good pictures, of the best movies, and of broadcasts also give opportunity for schools to teach discrimination. If we should begin to teach science at the level of the students' present attainment, why not literature also? "Since the high school too is a mass medium, its culture is inevitably a popular culture. But because it is a mass medium, it is in position to raise the popular taste. . . . The traditional role of the humanities is to introduce the student to the art of his society."

THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S INDIFFERENCE to or approval of the intrusion by government—or politicians—into colleges and personal beliefs seems to Archibald MacLeish to be due to Americans' loss of faith in the capacity of men to live as men in the world created by science and techniques. This loss of faith arises from teaching youth

only tools and techniques and neglecting the great conceptions of human destiny—in other words, neglect of the humanities. His "Loyalty and Freedom" is the lead article in the autumn *American Scholar*.

"PRONUNCIATION OF 'CAN'T' IN the Eastern States" is studied from the yet unedited records of the *Linguistic Atlas* by Sumner Ives in the October *American Speech*. Broad *a* as in "father" (or a little less broad) is common in Maine, New Hampshire, eastern Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Long *a* appears in North Carolina and in portions of other states adjoining it. Those who use short *a* may prolong it or follow it with an upglide, a hint of short *i* or short *e*. The glide is common in New York and Pennsylvania and eastern South Carolina. This brief summary of a long paper gives no impression of the great number of slight variations recorded.

DR. FREDERIC WERTHAM, consulting psychiatrist of the Department of Hospitals, New York City, and director of the Laforgue Clinic, has lately been devoting considerable time to reading "comic" books. He doesn't think they are comic, he believes most adults have no idea of the details and content of the majority of crime-comics, and he gives appalling evidence to show that there is a direct relationship between the fact that since 1947 juvenile delinquency has risen 20 per cent and the sale of comic books to 90,000,000 a month. His article, "What Parents Don't Know about Comic Books," appears in the November *Ladies' Home Journal* and should be read by every teacher and parent. He distinguishes carefully between the comic "strips," which function under a strict censorship of news-

paper editors, and the comic "books" with which he is concerned and whose publishers enjoy complete license. His main points, which he substantiates by numerous reproductions from the comic books, are these: that the crime-comics describe *in detail* every imaginable crime; that they present the details of how to commit crimes, how to conceal evidence, evade detection, hurt people; that they create a mental atmosphere of deceit, trickery, and cruelty; that, if one were to set out to teach children how to steal, rob, lie, cheat, assault, and break into stores, "no more insistent method could be devised." That the method is effective he shows by numerous illustrations from evidence taken in court cases of juvenile delinquents to which he was called as consultant. These make Charles Addams' cartoons seem like Sunday-school stories. Wertham urges legal control of comic books not just because of the question of sex, though their sexual abnormality is bad enough, but because of their glorification of crime and violence.

AT A RECENT CONFERENCE ON improving relations between British grammar schools and universities it is interesting to note that the same complaints were voiced as we hear at our own meetings on articulation between high schools and colleges. The British universities are upset about the "poor preparation" of their matriculating students; the grammar schools complain of their isolation from university thinking, of the aloof attitude of the universities, of the theorizing of the departments of education, and of the poor preparation of teachers. The *London Times Educational Supplement's* report of the conference (October 16) stirred up numerous letters from teacher-readers which appear in subsequent issues.

### About Literature

"MR. ELIOT, MR. TRILLING, AND *Huckleberry Finn*," by Leo Marx, in the autumn *American Scholar* attacks sharply those two critics' approval of the ending of that novel. Marx finds it out of key with the body of the story and by its superficiality

and lack of seriousness a negation of the whole theme of seeking freedom not only from chattel slavery but also from the insincere conventional world represented by Miss Watson and Sunday school. In the closing sentence of the book Huck indicates that he

has not given up the fight to escape convention, but the toying with Jim's freedom is never similarly redeemed. Marx still thinks it a great book—except the last episode—and shows insight into its merits.

In the same magazine Louis Kronenberger writes devastatingly about "America and Art." He finds that, perhaps because the vast natural resources at our command turned our attention outward instead of inward, we are not an artistic people. Art has remained for us something alien to the main business of living. The result is that in our creation, our criticism, and our consumption (enjoyment) of art we go to extremes. We vulgarize art, perhaps most dangerously when slightly, as in the movie version of *Henry the Fifth* or Stokowski's arrangements of Bach; or we flop to the highbrow style of difficulty and abstruseness.

HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED LETTERS by William Butler Yeats appear in a two-installment essay on the early days of the Irish Literary Revival in the October and November *Fortnightly*. The writer, Pamela Hinkson, is the daughter of Katherine Tynan, a long-time friend of Yeats, and herself a forceful influence in Irish letters. The essay is based on the correspondence between Mrs. Tynan and Yeats and on Mrs. Hinkson's own recollections of the poet, a frequent visitor at their home for thirty years. She creates a vivid picture of the thinking and the literary activities of the time.

AN INTERESTING STUDY OF THE friendship of Henry James and H. G. Wells is contributed by Michael Swan to the autumn *Cornhill*. Swan has had access to their unpublished correspondence and has based his essay on it. The letters are full of references to what each was thinking and writing about. In the beginning it appears that James regarded the younger Wells as a father might regard a brilliant young son. Then followed a period of uneasy quiescence during which James was made restive by the obvious rising of Wells's star. Later came the unnerving realization that Wells, Bennett,

and others had outstripped him in public favor, which accounts for James's outburst against Wells (father against son) in the London *Times Literary Supplement* and Wells's subsequent outraged *Boon* (the son turning on the father), a satire on James.

HILAIRE BELLOC IS PERHAPS BEST remembered today for the light verse of his *Cautionary Tales*, but his recent death at the age of eighty-three has precipitated at least two articles which recall his commanding and colorful personality and review his solid contributions to English literature. One, by Sir John Squire, appears in the October *Britain Today*; the other, by Theodore Maynard, in the October *Catholic World*.

THE DISTINGUISHED ENGLISH critic, V. S. Pritchett, discusses the current state of comic writing in England in the November *Harper's*. "The Englishman Laughs" is his title, and he points out that what the English laughed at before 1918 was quite different from what they laughed at after that date. Previous to 1918 the tradition of humor was masculine and extrovert. Suddenly, and immediately afterward, "the introverts went off at once into the braying laughter of outraged sensibility." Among these were Evelyn Waugh, Wyndham Lewis, Ivy Compton-Burnett, and Henry Green. Recently some effort has been made, he thinks, "to marry the brains of the modern school to the virility of the masculine tradition," and he cites the novels of Joyce Cary and Anthony Powell as examples.

"MOVIES AND TV," SUBTITLED "Murder or Merger," in the October *Atlantic* discusses the present and the potential effects of television upon the fate of moving pictures. It appears that mutual throat-cutting is neither necessary nor advisable. Rather it is recommended that movie producers get busy and use television as widely as possible as an advertising medium (there will always be a movie audience), that they produce *good* movies specifically for television (this could be an in-



dustry in itself), and that a gadget be made available to television viewers which would permit them to subscribe and pay for certain programs which could be seen only by owners of the gadget.

GOOD NEWS ABOUT SOME GOOD EFFECTS of television upon book reading is reported by the *Saturday Review*, which quotes Miss Gertrude Gscheidle, head librarian of the Chicago Public Library, as follows: "Throughout the past year the Chicago Public Library has received many requests, following television programs, for books mentioned, subjects discussed, and plays presented." She believes that television can be a "real ally of all agencies working with the educational, recreational, and inspirational needs of children and adults."

"HOLLYWOOD VERDICT: GILT BUT Not Guilty," by Arthur Mayer, is the sixth in the *Saturday Review's* "Common Man Series" assessing the level of taste in a mass-communication society (October 31). Mayer points out that, with Hollywood madly experimenting with new techniques, the moment is ripe for the art theater to justify its existence. Only 3 per cent of the theaters in the country now show anything but the stereotype Hollywood film. Such theaters are to be found chiefly in some seven large cities and show mostly foreign films. There is no reason why we should not have American films equal to or surpassing the best of the foreign importations and produced at much less cost than the usual Hollywood production. Actually, neither "Hollywood moguls nor inflexible exhibitors" stand in the way. "All that is necessary is for intellectuals to stop paying lip service to the better cinema and to start paying admission. When they do so, the exciting thing about American movies will be, not how much wider they are, but how much better."

"MEDITERRANEAN MOVIE MAKING" (*Saturday Review*, October 24) is by Arthur Knight, who contributed the lead article in the October *English Journal* on

"Types, Stereotypes, and Acting in Films." In this article Knight discusses that most remarkable feature of European film production today—the notable increase in *joint* production of films by companies representing different nationalities. The French and English are co-operating, the French and Italians, the Italians with the Spanish and the Germans. There is even one Italo-Turkish picture now in production. In the film industry internationalism has become specific, and for the first time the possibility of a truly European film is on the horizon.

THE MYTH OF CHARLIE CHAPLIN IS discussed in the autumn *Western Review* by Parker Tyler (film reviewer for *Theatre Arts*). Tyler's view is that Chaplin's works of art are among the deeds which must be examined "as tokens of moral calibre in the professional comedian." He finds the clue to Chaplin's personality in the disappearance of the Tramp from his later pictures and the appearance of Monsieur Verdoux, and of Calvero (for whom his own father was the prototype), as the chief character in *Limelight*. In a very detailed analysis of all Chaplin's major pictures, Tyler discusses the relation between Chaplin's "inner man" and the imaginary stories of the screen. His conclusions generally are these: that, since Chaplin has never been really outspoken about his inner processes except through his works of art, he could not explain that *Monsieur Verdoux* represented what the Tramp was capable of escaping (the Tramp was down-trodden but never fatally maimed in his moral sense); Verdoux was a grotesque that Chaplin invented as a horrible example of what the economic fate might do to a potentially ordinary man. Finally, Tyler thinks that "the moot issue of Chaplin's morality as a man has been tremendously simplified by *Limelight*," which, he considers, shows "the morality of an artist for whom idealism is the Torch of Liberty itself." The reader may not agree with these conclusions, but Tyler's survey-review of the pictures, and his artistic evaluation of them, is something new and helpful.



## New Books

### Teaching Materials

**A RHETORIC CASE BOOK.** By *Francis Connolly*. Harcourt, Brace. Pp. 735. The purpose of this book is to provide the beginning student with principles, models, and exercises which will help him learn how to communicate his ideas effectively. Each section begins with a clear statement of historical principles, followed by an example which is analyzed to show how the principle operates and a graduated series of exercises in analysis and original composition. The more than one hundred selections which constitute the examples range from Plato's "Apology" to Alan Devoe's "The Hibernation of a Woodchuck" and Phyllis McGinley's "Surburbia: Of Thee I Sing."

**THE CRAFT OF COMPOSITION.** By *John Ostrom*. Holt. Pp. 441. The subtitle, "A Practical Approach to Sentences, Paragraphs and Themes," indicates that this is not just another handbook. The emphasis is upon the communication of ideas. Several chapters are devoted to the paragraph, and stress is laid upon the *controlling idea* within the topic sentence as an aid to achieving unity and coherence. The discussion of grammar, diction and the dictionary, punctuation, etc., are all presented in detail and with the kind of informality a teacher might use in a student conference directed toward a student's individual needs.

**FUNDAMENTALS OF PUBLIC SPEAKING.** By *Donald C. Bryant and Karl R. Wallace*. 2d ed. Appleton-Century-Crofts. Pp. 493. The plan of the first edition has been kept, namely, to present the beginning student progressively with what he needs as nearly as possible when he needs it, but the whole text has been thoroughly revised, and new chapters have been added on "Visual Materials," "The Speaker's Language," "Group Discussion," and "Parliamentary Procedure."

**YOUR VOICE AND YOUR SPEECH.** By *Letitia Raubicheck*. Prentice-Hall. Pp. 376. \$3.24. A revised edition of *Voice and Speech Problems*, by Raubicheck, Davis, and Carll,

published in 1931. The new features of this edition include sections on the radio and television; the addition, to the dramatic unit, of improvisation, classroom dramatics, and problem-solving plays; and a considerable expansion of the chapter on speech as communication in harmony with modern needs. The phonetics chapter now includes recognition of the major regional variations, and the selections for reading now include more modern prose and verse than selections from Shakespeare.

**BASIC TRAINING IN SPEECH.** By *Lester Thonssen and Howard Gilkinson*. 2d ed. Heath. Pp. 494. \$4.00. A text for the "beginning" or "fundamentals" college course in speech, considerably revised from the 1947 edition. Includes many new illustrations, exercises, and projects, new theoretical and experimental data, and a new appendix with three full-length specimen speeches

**THE ART OF GOOD SPEECH.** By *James H. McBurney and Ernest J. Wrage*. Prentice-Hall. Pp. 584. \$4.50. An introduction discusses the role, the standards, and the principles of good speech; the major portion of the book discusses principles and methods; and a third section, the types of speech. The text throughout is focused to the purpose of providing a working knowledge of the principles that underlie good speech and that may be applied to produce it.

**A GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKING.** By *Lawrence Henry Moul*. Heath. Pp. 262. \$2.75. A text for the beginning student but one which will be helpful to others also. Part I, "Elements of Speechmaking," provides a step-by-step guide for the preparation of a speech, with considerable emphasis on outlining; Part II, "Types of Speeches," includes a thorough treatment of each type of speech; and Part III, "Speech Criticism," provides principles of speech criticism, together with a number of speeches to be criticized by the student.

## *Nonfiction*

**THE PRE-RAPHAELITES IN LITERATURE AND ART.** *Edited with an Introduction by D. S. R. Welland.* Barnes & Noble. Pp. 216. \$2.50. The eleventh volume in the "Life, Literature, and Thought Library," the purpose of which is to provide a series of books illustrating some of the chief developments in English civilization since the Middle Ages. It includes extracts from Pre-Raphaelite writings on art, from their creative writing, and from the criticisms of their contemporaries. The particular poems, prose, and pictures presented have been chosen to facilitate the study of art and literature when both are practiced concurrently by the same artists. 24 illustrations.

**THE DARING YOUNG MEN.** *By David H. Dickason.* Indiana University Press. Pp. 304. \$5.00. A lively account of the American Pre-Raphaelites, including Buchanan Read, Joaquin Miller, Sidney Lanier, Sara Teasdale, Vachel Lindsay, John La Farge, and the early Ezra Pound, from which emerges a vivid picture of a fruitful experimental period in our cultural history. Particularly interesting for those of us who can remember antimacassars *in use* and the excitement caused by their removal!

**THE COLUMBIA-VIKING DESK ENCYCLOPEDIA.** Viking. Pp. 1092. \$7.95. Thumb-indexed, \$8.95. This "concise version of the great *Columbia Encyclopedia*" has 31,000 articles, most of them a few lines. The brief items are more satisfying than one would expect, and usually persons included whom one never heard of or has forgotten prove to have significance. The claim to emphasis upon the contemporary seems, at least in literature, to be only relatively true. Most writers of any period are given a sentence—or, at most two sentences—of comment and a list of well-known works. Some fairly important persons are mentioned only incidentally, as Margaret Webster only under Eva Le Gallienne. The scholar, when he turns to an encyclopedia, will want more than this gives, but frequently the student or the layman doing general reading will get sufficient information. There is no question of reliability. 5½" × 8".

**"MODERNISM" IN MODERN DRAMA.** *By Joseph Wood Krutch.* Cornell University Press. Pp. 138. \$2.75. By "modernism" Krutch

means primarily the feeling that the present and the future are and should be sharply different from the past. The supposedly new beliefs, doubts, attitudes, and judgments which modernists hold seem to Krutch to lead to "something like intellectual and moral paralysis." His survey begins with Ibsen and comes to the present. The book consists of Messenger Lectures delivered at Cornell in 1952.

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW: A CRITICAL SURVEY.** *Edited, with an Introduction, by Louis Kronenberger.* World Publishing. Pp. 262. \$6.00. The editor thinks Shaw important today for his genius as a showman of ideas rather than for his ideas, which were sometimes sound, sometimes unsound, sometimes contradictory, and which concerned issues now dead. Shaw fails to move us because these are plays of ideas rather than of human nature, without his own personal involvement. The twenty-one essays are arranged chronologically from Beerbohm (1901) to Mann (1950).

**SARTRE: ROMANTIC RATIONALIST.** *By Iris Murdoch.* ("Studies in Modern European Literature and Thought.") Yale University Press. Pp. 78. \$2.00. An Oxford philosophy tutor expounds Sartre's thought as revealed both in fiction and in nonfiction. He wants to get behind our "perceptions," which are partly our own interpretations of our sensations, to reality, which he finds particular and unorganized. The expositor quotes or summarizes Sartre to help those who have not read him much or perceptively but assumes the reader's familiarity with philosophical terms and French phrases.

**KATHERINE MANSFIELD: A BIOGRAPHY.** *By Anthony Alpers.* Knopf. Pp. 376. \$5.00. A New Zealander born within a stone's throw of the birthplace of Miss Mansfield, and, like her, distressed by the lack of culture there, writes the story of her personal life. He has consulted her sister and "L. M." and has been given access to papers not available before. He reveals a passionate personality—artistic temperament—and some of the influences which affected her development.

**ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD: AN ANTHOLOGY.** *Selected by F. S. C. Northrop and*

*Mason Gross*. Macmillan. Pp. 928. \$12.50. Two professors of philosophy present here what they regard as Whitehead's most important ideas with as little repetition as possible: the whole of "On Mathematical Concepts of the Material World" (otherwise unavailable) and selected chapters from *The Aim of Education and Other Essays; Symbolism, Its Meaning and Effect; Modes of Thought*; and seven other books.

**ART AND SUBSTANCE IN GEORGE MEREDITH.** *By Walter F. Wright*. University of Nebraska Press. Pp. 211. \$3.75. The critic terms his work "A Study in Narrative" and deals with Meredith's poetry only when it is narrative or immediately pertinent to the study of the novels. After two general chapters devoted to (1) Meredith's concepts of life and his literary theory and (2) his fictitious world and artistic method, the critic traces the writer's pursuit of truth through imaginative creation.

**HILAIRE BELLOC: NO ALIENATED MAN.** *By Frederick Wilhelmsen*. Sheed & Ward. Pp. 108. \$2.75. The alienation of contemporary man, which Wilhelmsen thinks arises from a misapplication of modern psychology and biology, Belloc avoided, primarily through religion. Feeling that sin is due to failure of human nature rather than to its essential qualities, he lived to the full, somewhat robustly.

**ROGER WILLIAMS: HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE AMERICAN TRADITION.** *By Perry Miller*. ("Makers of the American Tradition Series.") By means of excerpts from texts of Williams' own work not accessible to the general reader, and his own running comment, Miller reveals a more complex and puzzling personality than the simple hero we had thought Williams to be. His purpose, however, is not to write a biography or a character sketch but to show what Williams contributed to our way of life—the conviction that virtue gives no one the right to impose his own beliefs upon others.

**ANSWERABLE STYLE: ESSAYS ON PARADISE LOST.** *By Arnold Stein*. University of Minnesota Press. \$3.50. Six essays in the order in which they were written (and of increasing understanding, Stein thinks): "Satan," "The War in Heaven," "A Note on Hell," "The Garden," "The Fall," and "Answerable Style." In the manner of the New Criticism the author finds in Milton's work subtle beauties usually overlooked—some that Milton probably was

not conscious of. In spots, Stein's language becomes heavy and vague.

**GOD OR CAESAR?** *By Vardis Fisher*. Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers. \$5.00. A successful novelist here discusses "The Writing of Fiction for Beginners." "God" in the title is art, the writer's vision; "Caesar" is the market, the taste of the Philistines. Fisher deals little with the craft of writing but aims at establishing the right attitudes or scaring the unfit aspirant out of fiction into advertising.

**MEMORIES.** *By Desmond MacCarthy*. Forewords by Raymond Mortimer and Cyril Conolly. Oxford Press. \$3.50. Nineteen essays, nine articles about people, memories—and one about spiders. Writers discussed include Bennett, Wells, Trollope, Maugham, Kipling, Joyce, Whitman, Thurber Lear, and others.

**RELIGION AND VITAL LIVING.** *By Thomas S. Kepler*. World. Pp. 113. \$2.50. Kepler, professor of New Testament in Oberlin College, is a liberal theologian and preacher. One judges that he is also counselor to many perplexed young people. He thinks religion should be intellectually mature and stresses the necessity for the individual to lose himself in something larger outside himself, ideally through trusting God and serving others. His book should be helpful even to the agnostic.

**THE SECRET HISTORY OF STALIN'S CRIMES.** *By Alexander Orlov*. Random House. \$4.50. Orlov was once Soviet chief of counter-intelligence and therefore knows much about the personal relations and activities of Soviet leaders. His story begins with an almost unbelievably complicated plot by Stalin to destroy an opponent in the Politburo. Although he knew of this, Orlov continued in Soviet service for four years and ran away only when he knew his own life was in danger. His picture of a power-mad, vengeful, heartless dictator is revolting, infuriating—even when we allow for Orlov's Trotskyite bias.

**VERMONT TRADITION: THE BIOGRAPHY OF AN OUTLOOK ON LIFE.** *By Dorothy Canfield Fisher*. Little, Brown. \$4.50. The author quotes her father as saying that she has lived in Vermont since 1763. Through her Great-Uncle Zed she learned much of her great-grandmother. Tradition—the Vermont tradition, and "how Vermont history shaped, moulded, and created Vermont character"—is the

subject of her book. "We are sure that happiness comes only from within the human heart." Chapters on Ethan Allen, John Dewey, Robert Frost. It is an "outlook on life" to inspire young and old.

#### NEW POEMS BY AMERICAN POETS.

*Edited by Rolfe Humphries.* Ballantine Books. Pp. 179. \$0.35. This original book offers more than two hundred poems by more than fifty poets. Only two of these have appeared before in books and less than half anywhere. They are of widely unequal merit, of course, but more than worth a quarter and a dime to anyone interested in contemporary literature as such.

**THE GOLDEN TREASURY.** *Revised and enlarged by Oscar Williams.* ("Mentor Books.") New American Library. Pp. 532. \$0.50. The four "books" of Palgrave's original collection are reproduced with Book Five: poems from Donne to Blake not included by Palgrave; Book Six: Landor to Tennyson; and Book Seven: Hardy to Dylan Thomas. Book Five has much of the best of Keats and Donne. Slender Book Six (70 pages) emphasizes Tennyson and also skims American poetry of the period. Book Seven (115 pages) emphasizes Yeats, Millay, Hopkins, without apparent bias toward either Britain or America. Williams exercises catholic taste, but Book Seven may later seem as much out of balance as Palgrave's liberality to Wordsworth and neglect of Keats and Donne.

#### THE HARVARD BOOK: SELECTIONS

FROM THREE CENTURIES. *Edited by William Bentinck-Smith.* Harvard University Press. \$5.00. A collection of what Harvard men in many professions have written about Harvard. Contents: "Writing Like a Harvard Man"; "What Is This Place?"; "Pedagogues and Pupils"; "Trouble under the Elms"; "You Can Tell a Harvard Man"; "Sports and Sporting Men"; "Her Solitary Boys"; "Three Festival Rites"; "The Alumni"; "Some Visitors from Afar." The great and well-known "giants of Harvard's last 75 years" and earlier days are all here, from Oliver Wendell Holmes and James Russell Lowell to Thomas Wolfe and John P. Marquand. 369 pages.

**A TREE IS A TREE.** *By King Vidor.* Harcourt. \$3.95. In 1915 young Vidor and his wife went from Texas to Hollywood. With simplicity and dignity he tells the story of his life and the passing of the silent films to the "big screen,"

which he first used in 1931. His stories of Greta Garbo, Laurette Taylor, F. Scott Fitzgerald, J. P. Marquand, Irving Thalberg, and others are of special interest. Appendix: "The Films of King Vidor." Photographs.

#### Reprints

**ONE TWO THREE . . . INFINITY: FACTS AND SPECULATIONS OF SCIENCE.** *By George Gamow.* ("Mentor Books.") New American Library. \$0.50. Fascinating reading about numbers, space and relativity, the world within the atom, and the universe outside the earth.

**THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD IN TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY PAGES.** *By René Sédillot.* ("Mentor Books.") New American Library. \$0.35. The story from prehistoric men to 1949 as one man sees it. Concise and in economical typography.

**OUR EDUCATIONAL DISCONTENTS.** *By Percy H. Houston.* Christopher Publishing House. Pp. 125. A college teacher of English, an inspiring speaker, here attacks "progressive education," which he blames for the ignorance and lack of ideals of college students. His summary of Dewey's *Democracy and Education* is—unintentionally—an exaggeration of Dewey's thought, quite failing to see any moral quality in Dewey's concept of maturity. All familiar with American high schools know that most of them make no attempt to be "progressive" and that only a few illustrate, imperfectly, its ideals. Dr. Houston should read *Were We Guinea Pigs?* and *Did They Succeed in College?* If some, thinking they were following Dewey, have ignored literature and philosophy and the fine arts, they need Houston's admonition to put moral and cultural values first; such schools or teachers are few.

#### BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN SCHOOL AND COLLEGE.

("Evaluation Reports," No. 1.) The Fund for the Advancement of Teaching, 575 Madison Avenue, New York 22. Stiff paper, free. This deals with four studies supported by the Fund. The School and College Study, already reported in the *Harvard General Education in School and College*, has made suggestions for eliminating the overlap between selected prep school and college—chiefly in sciences and foreign languages. Meeting the needs of exceptionally endowed students is the object of the Portland, Oregon, study conducted by Reed



College and the public schools. Enrichment is emphasized more than acceleration. Admission to college with advanced standing is being tried out by a group of eleven high-ranking colleges and twenty-two secondary schools. Early admission to college of specially able students is being tried by a dozen colleges, with *initially* good results. Believers in the humanities can hardly hope that these acceleration programs will do much to enrich the personal culture of the students.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF READING LISTS FOR RETARDED READERS. *Compiled by Margaret Keyser Hill.* (State University of Iowa Extension Bulletin No. 37.) State University of Iowa. \$0.10. An invaluable document for all teachers making special efforts to provide reading for their weaker readers. Carefully done, but already partially out of date—for example, *Reading for Fun* (NCTE) has been replaced by *Adventuring with Books* (\$0.60), and the Glenn M. Blair list in the *English Journal* is not reprinted and the magazine is not available for general distribution. The remedial teacher of reading, if there is one in your school, would like to know about this pamphlet.

THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF PREJUDICE. *By Gerhart Saenger.* Harper. \$4.00. A professor of psychology examines the courses of racial and other group prejudices and points to means of lessening it. Education in school and through mass media and meetings of organizations is important. More effective than information and discussion is intergroup contact on a footing of equality—in housing projects and in work on community problems not ethnic or religious in character. Frustrations and low frustration-tolerance increase prejudice. Development of self-confident personalities with many interests would largely eliminate racial prejudice.

CAUSES OF PUBLIC UNREST PERTAINING TO EDUCATION. *Edited by Raymond F. Howes.* American Council on Education. Pp. 74. \$1.00. Selected addresses and statements to a conference at Harvard last summer sponsored by its Graduate School of Education and the American Council. The keynote address is an appeal to fight McCarthyism. President Adams' address names the lingering distrust of the people's honesty and judgment as the chief cause of the unrest.

### Fiction, Poetry, Drama

A HANDFUL OF BLACKBERRIES. *By Ignazio Silone.* Harper. \$3.50. The author is a foremost Italian writer. Rocco, who fought with the Partisans and rejoiced at Mussolini's defeat, became a Communist. The girl he loved was also a party member. They hoped Italy's poverty would be relieved, but they changed their minds when they understood the ruthless plans of the Communists. There are some fine characters and beautiful descriptions of the countryside. An important book.

THE TRITONIAN RING. *By L. Sprague de Camp.* Twayne. \$2.95. A science-fiction novel and four short stories, all laid in a fantasy world of a prehistoric Bronze Age. Savagery, sorcery, and sadism all have a part as gods of the West seek the overthrow of the kingdom of Poseidonis. The headless zombies and the supernatural play a colorful part. The author is one of the best in this genre.

THE SHORT NOVELS OF JOHN STEINBECK. *Introduction by Joseph Henry Jackson.* Viking. \$2.95. Jackson asserts that, more plainly than in his longer novels, the short ones "show the author's declared purpose to further understanding between man and man." Included are: *Tortilla Flat*, *The Red Pony*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The Moon Is Down*, *Cannery Row*, and *The Pearl*.

THEATRE '53. *Edited by John Chapman.* Random House. First volume of a theater annual. Authorized reading (condensed) versions of twelve leading plays of June, 1952, to May, 1953, including Pulitzer prize-winning *Picnic*, Arthur Miller's drama of the Salem witchcraft trials. Barrett Clark gives an interesting analysis of the "grass-roots" theater in schools, towns, camps, hospitals, jails, etc. Sketches of actors and lists of theater books. 564 pages.

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In Part II (the handbook proper) the author has reduced the number of rules from seventy-five to sixty. Actually there is more material but it is so grouped that the student will find in one place every rule and its exceptions pertaining to any one question of style or correct usage. The book is not rigidly prescriptive but approaches the student in a friendly, informal manner, giving him at the same time a firm footing in the matter of usage.

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